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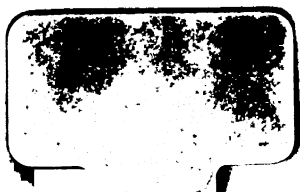
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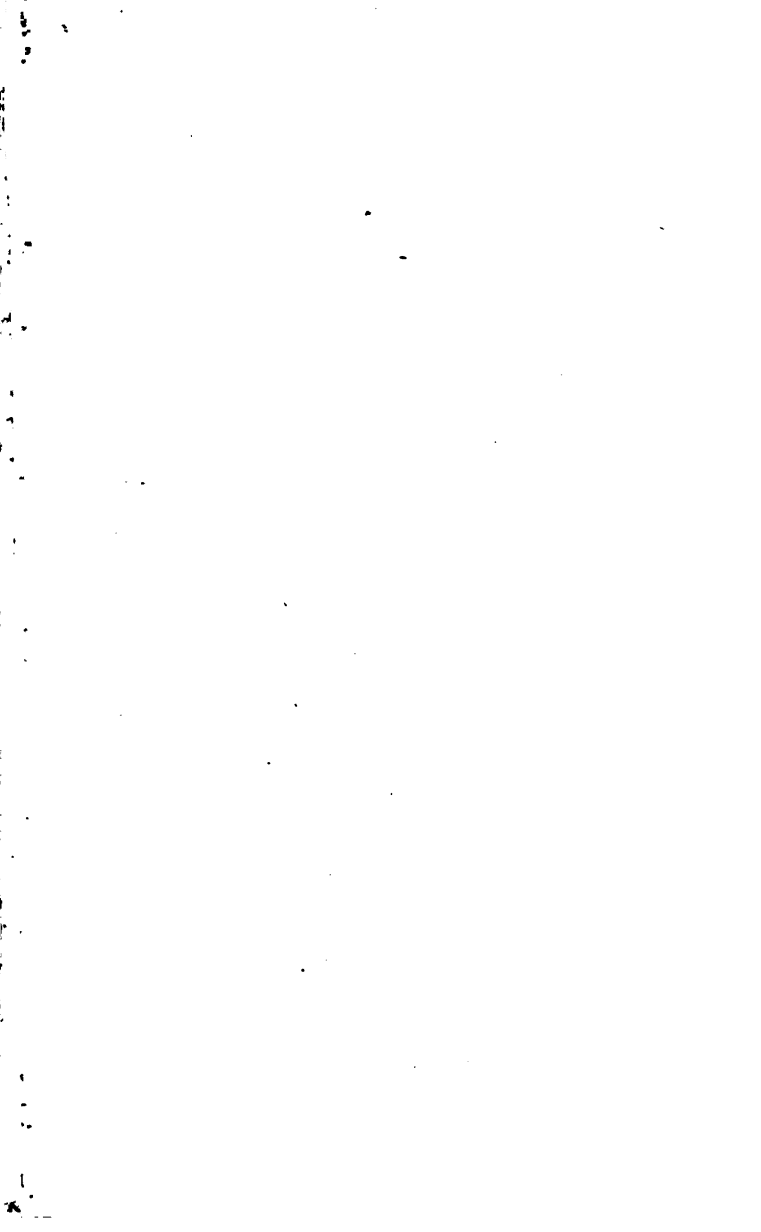
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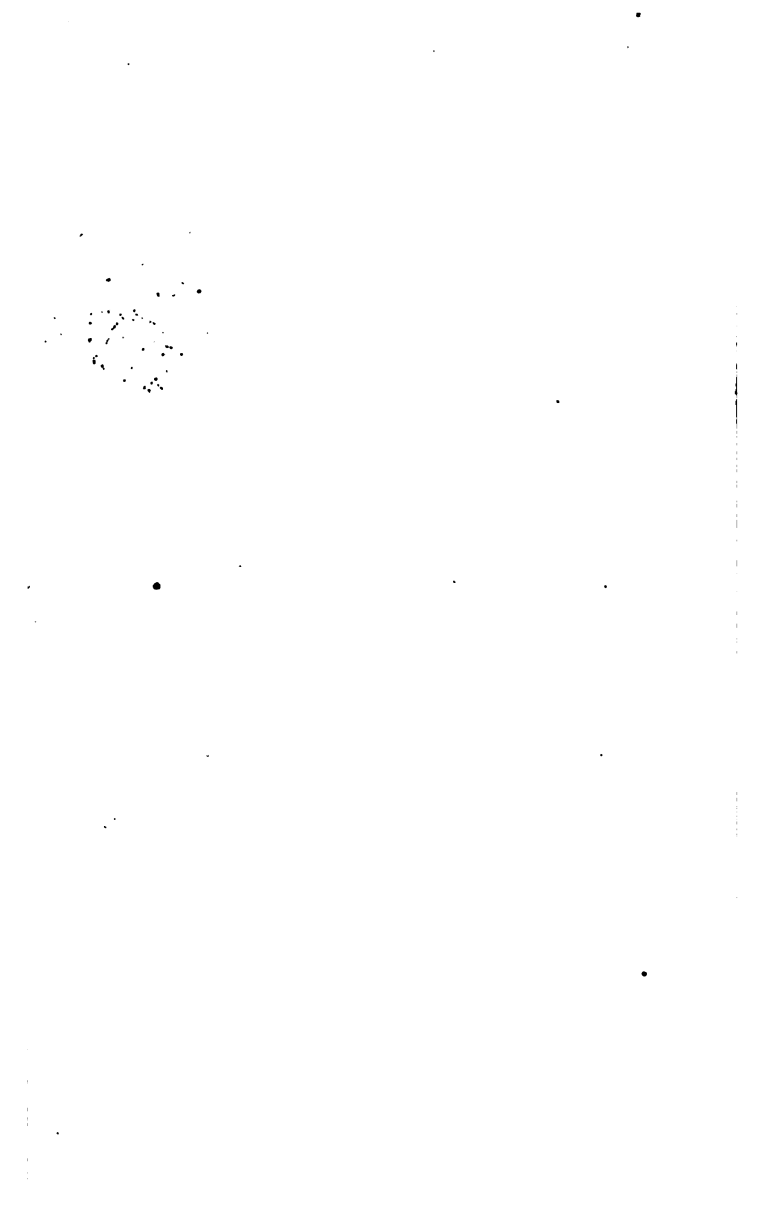


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THE

ESMA

BY

TAYLOR, ESQ.

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELD

16

honoris literarum, ut homine
usquam aviculæ, qualis est
et cantilando se oblectari solea
genere esse, ut qui in alto ve
dit, et prædam rapere novit.

De Au

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249 .

LONDON :
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TO
JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

AS TO THE MAN WITHIN THE AUTHOR'S KNOWLEDGE

IN WHOM THE ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE

FACULTIES MOST STRONGLY MEET,

ARE INSCRIBED

THESE DISQUISITIONS

CONCERNING THE ATTRIBUTES OF

A STATESMAN.

PREFACE.

AMONGST the writers on Government whose works my limited opportunities of study have enabled me to examine, I have not met with any who have treated systematically of *Administrative* Government as it ought to be exercised in a free state. Authors in abundance, from Aristotle to Hobbes, have written out theories of civil society ; and it is not to be questioned that their writings must have had momentous political consequences, if it were only through the exercise and direction which they gave to men's thoughts. But these consequences, whatever they may have been, were so indirectly brought about, that he who would

examine wherein they have been injurious and wherein beneficial, seems to lose himself amidst the general materials and results of the intellectual universe. And whilst the structure of communities and the nature of political powers and institutions were thus extensively investigated, the art of *exercising* political functions, which might seem to be no unimportant part of political science, has occupied hardly any place in the speculations of its professors.

It is not necessary, I admit, that the structural and functional divisions of the science should be treated by the same writers and in the same works; and perhaps it is not to be expected that a concurrence of competency to treat both should often take place in one individual. Yet I cannot but think that the one branch of knowledge would have been carried farther, if some portion of the attention of its teachers had been spared to the other. Some of the most eminent of them, as it appears to me (regarding them

not certainly without high respect for their intellectual endowments), have wanted that habitual reference to the *end* in their political problems, which an attention to ministerial operations would naturally have induced; and by aiming too much at scientific analysis in matters of government, have removed the mind of their disciples back from the field of practical wisdom, and rather tend to involve it in definitions and distinctions, than to clear it from any difficulties, or to solve those questions concerning things in combined existence, which have so little to do with the primary origination of things. I would take this exception to them even as regards their investigations into the nature of political rights and of bodies politic; whereinto, as it appears to me, they have carried the common error of their minds, — that, namely, of exalting primary elements into considerations of primary importance. Matters of modification, things incidental or collateral,

have so much more considerable a part in every polity than things essential, that to resolve it into its elements is not so great a help as these writers seem to suppose, towards the understanding of it as it acts and exists, or the discovery of its destiny. So of the essential passions of human nature, which, considered in their relations with civil institutions, are treated of in the same manner by the authors I speak of, — exercising, so far as their political disquisitions are concerned, rather their reasoning than their judging faculties; perhaps I might even venture to say of some of them, exercising the former faculties almost to the exclusion of the latter. Thus it is that the course of things, except in so far as it is reached by remote and circuitous influences, has commonly passed these philosophers on the right hand and on the left.

Of a very different kind of doctors in this art are the writers upon political affairs who have

been practised in them. "Ipsos tamen politicos
"multo felicius de rebus politicis scripsisse,
"quam philosophos, dubitari non potest," is the
admission of Spinoza; who saw clearly, though
he was not, I think, very successful in avoiding,
the dangers of treating politics metaphysically.
Bacon, Machiavelli, and Burke, are signal illus-
trations of the truth of Spinoza's remark. These
sages did not attempt to navigate the river at
its source: they saw the wisdom of having no-
thing more than a *reference*, pervasive, certainly,
but not binding, to elemental philosophy in
political affairs; they brought to the consider-
ation of them minds, which, at the same time
that they were braced by scientific discipline,
were capable of being loosened sufficiently for
the grasping of practical results; and they felt
themselves free to come to clear conclusions on
matters which refuse demonstration.

But although the works of these three poli-
ticians, to whose names that of Tacitus is, as far

as I know, the only one which could be properly associated, contain numerous civil precepts applicable to the administration as well as to the constitution of governments, they leave still unattempted the formation of any coherent body of administrative doctrine. Moreover, the maxims of the elder of them at least are suggested by the circumstances of states nearly or wholly despotic, or of oligarchies, and by a range of political business far less complex and multifarious than the condition of society in these times presents. And even as to what was applicable in the 17th century, the greatest of these authorities, in the book (the 8th of the "De Augmentis") which brought the most copious increase that has ever been made to this kind of knowledge, sets down at the same time a large note of deficiency.

I should be much indeed misunderstood, if, in pointing to this want in our literature, I were supposed to advance, on the part of the volume

thus introduced, the slightest pretension to supply it. Amongst the dreams of juvenile presumption, it had, I acknowledge, at one time entered into my fancy, that if life should be long continued to me, and leisure should by any happy accident accrue upon it, I might, in the course of years, undertake such an enterprise. When this vision lost some of its original brightness, I still conceived that I might be enabled to blot from Lord Bacon's note of "deficients" so much of the doctrine "*De Negotiis*" as belongs to the division which he has entitled "*De occasionibus sparsis.*" But the colours of this exhalation also faded in due season; and when the scheme came to be chilled and condensed, the contents of the following volume were the only result that, for the present at least, I could hope to realise. Concerning the nature of these contents, I have little to add to the tabular enumeration prefixed to the volume, except that the topics which I have treated are such as ex-

perience, rather than inventive meditation, has suggested to me. The engagements which have deprived me of literary leisure and a knowledge of books, have, on the other hand, afforded me an extensive and diversified conversancy with business; and I hope, therefore, that I may claim from my readers some indulgence for the little learning and for the desultoriness of these disquisitions, in consideration of the value which they may be disposed to attach to comments derived from practical observation.

London, May, 1836.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning the Education of Youth destined for a Civil Career - - - -	Page 1
--	--------

CHAPTER II.

Of the Age at which Official and Parliamentary Life should commence - - - -	9
--	---

CHAPTER III.

A Statesman's most pregnant Function lies in the Choice and Use of Instruments - - - -	13
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

On the getting and keeping of Adherents -	23
---	----

CHAPTER V.

In the Choice of Men how far Literary Merit may be a Guide	-	-	-	-	Page 33
---	---	---	---	---	---------

CHAPTER VI

Of Official Style	-	-	-	-	39
-------------------	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER VII.

On the Inferences of Merit or Demerit from Popularity, and something concerning False Reputations	-	-	-	-	43
--	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Concerning Interviews	-	-	-	-	49
-----------------------	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER IX.

Concerning the Conscience of a Statesman	-	-	-	-	60
--	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER X.

Concerning the Age at which a Statesman should marry, and what manner of Woman he should take to Wife	-	-	-	-	66
---	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER XI.

Concerning the Effects of Order and the Maintenance of Equanimity	-	-	-	-	76
--	---	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER XII.

Concerning certain Points of Practice	-	Page 82
---------------------------------------	---	---------

CHAPTER XIII.

On Official Criticism	-	-	-	88
-----------------------	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER XIV.

On the Arts of Rising	-	-	-	91
-----------------------	---	---	---	----

CHAPTER XV.

On Quarrelling	-	-	-	101
----------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

On the Ethics of Politics	-	-	-	108
---------------------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

On Consistency in a Statesman	-	-	-	121
-------------------------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

On Secrecy	-	-	-	128
------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

On Ambition	-	-	-	132
-------------	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XX.

Concerning Rank as a Qualification for High Office	-	-	-	-	Page 136
--	---	---	---	---	----------

CHAPTER XXI.

On Decisiveness	-	-	-	-	141
-----------------	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

REFORM OF THE EXECUTIVE.

Concerning the Constitution of an Office or Establishment for transacting the Business of a Minister	146
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

Further respecting Reform of the Executive and the Establishment of a Minister of State. — Private Secretaries. — Clerks	-	-	-	165
--	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

Concerning Preci-writers, and Processes of Business	-	-	-	-	189
---	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

Upon the Methods by which a Statesman can upon occasion get his Work done out of Doors	-	197
--	---	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

On Parliamentary Interposition in Administrative Business	-	-	-	-	Page 202
---	---	---	---	---	----------

CHAPTER XXVII.

On Aids to Legislation to be derived from Executive Experience	-	-	-	-	206
--	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of the Manner in which able, and of the Manner in which indifferent Statesmen are deterred from availing themselves of able Service ; and of the Evils which ensue from Men's Authority being in the inverse Ratio of their Abilities	-	-	-	-	212
---	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

On the Administration of Patronage	-	-	-	-	217
------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

Concerning the Amusements of a Statesman	-	-	-	-	223
--	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

On Manners	-	-	-	-	232
------------	---	---	---	---	-----

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of Statesmen bred such, and of Statesmen bred in the Army, in the Navy, in Commerce, and at the Bar - - - -	Page 241
---	----------

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Statesman out of Office - - -	253
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Conclusion - - - -	261
--------------------	-----

THE STATESMAN.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH DESTINED
FOR A CIVIL CAREER.

“ NEITHER is it to be passed over in silence,
“ that this dedicating of colleges and societies
“ only to the use of professory learning hath
“ not only been an enemy to the growth of
“ sciences, but hath redounded likewise to the
“ prejudice of states and governments: for
“ hence it commonly falls out that princes,

“ when they would make choice of ministers fit
“ for the affairs of state, finde about them such
“ a marveilous solitude of able men ; because
“ there is no education collegiate designed to
“ this end, where such as are framed and
“ fitted by nature thereto, might give them-
“ selves chiefly to histories, modern languages,
“ books, and discourses of policy, that so they
“ might come more able and better furnished to
“ service of state.” — *Advancement of Learning*,
book i. For the tuition thus wanting in colle-
giate establishments (a defect which Lord Ba-
con’s notice has done nothing to cure), some
sucedaneum might be found in the due direction
of private education to this end, by parents who
design their sons for political life. At the age
of sixteen, or thereabouts, the general education
of the boy should be for the most part com-
pleted ; and whether or not it be completed, at
that age, or but little later, the specific should
begin.

History, which is first in Lord Bacon's enumeration, is still considered to be the fittest study for statesmen. An extensive knowledge of history will doubtless be of great advantage if other knowledge be not precluded by it; but, as regards the public business of these times, it may be questioned whether this branch be not disproportionately esteemed, in comparison with others. A knowledge of particular epochs, connected with peculiarity and revolution in the state of societies, and especially with modern revolutions, is chiefly valuable and indispensable. And all histories in which the lives and actions of men are represented in minute detail will furnish knowledge of human nature and food for reflection. But *summary* histories, such as those of Hume and Gibbon, though not to be altogether dispensed with, should hardly be read in abundance. They are useful as giving a frame-work of general knowledge, into which particular knowledge may be fitted. But

as to other uses, they commonly do but charge the memory with a sequence of events, leaving no lively impressions or portraitures, and consequently teaching little. They treat, in ninety-nine pages out of a hundred, of what is common, not distinctive — common to all mankind, or to large classes — common to all ages, or at least to long tracts of time; and we gather little more from the names and events of five centuries than what was conveyed to us by those of one. For it is from individualities that we learn; and even the political character of an age will be best taught when it is thrown into the life and character of an individual. Thus, for example, Lord Strafford's despatches and the Clarendon state papers will be studied with more profit to a statesman than any history of the reign of Charles I.; and it is the materials for histories, rather than histories themselves, which, being judiciously selected, should be presented to the perusal of the pupil.

But there are severer studies than these, which are, to say the least, as necessary, and which are more likely to be neglected. A general knowledge of the laws of the land, and of international law, of foreign systems of jurisprudence, and especially a knowledge of the prominent defects of the system at home, should be diligently inculcated; and political economy should be taught with equal care, not less for the indispensable knowledge which it conveys than as a wholesome exercise for the reasoning faculty — employed in this science less loosely than in ethics or history, less abstractedly than in mathematics.

In the further progress of the pupil, it will be well that he should be brought more closely to matters of business, and taught the application of his knowledge. With this view, public documents, which have been printed for Parliament or otherwise, may be made use of. Let a

question be selected which has been inquired into by a committee of either House of Parliament; let the minutes of evidence taken before the committee be laid before the pupil without their report; and let him be required to report upon that evidence himself, exhibiting, 1st, The material facts of the case as drawn from the evidence; 2d, The various views and opinions which have been or might be adopted upon the matter; 3d, The conclusions of his own judgment, with his reasons; 4th, If he concludes for legislation, a draft of the law by which he would execute his purposes; 5th, A draft of the speech with which he would introduce his proposed law to the notice of the legislature. If the inquiry relate to executive matters rather than legislative, as in the case of any investigation made into the propriety of the dismissal of a public servant, his task will be to state the facts, to point out circumstances of extenuation or aggravation,

and to deliver his opinion of the conduct and deserts of all parties concerned.

Concurrently with these exercises, the pupil should be encouraged to frequent juvenile debating societies. If the practice of public speaking be not begun in youth, it will be a matter of serious difficulty afterwards; and failure will then be more disheartening, humiliating, and hurtful. Moreover, it may be observed, that they who have to surmount the nervous embarrassments by which a novice in public speaking is beset, commonly do so by lashing themselves into an excess of fervour and vehemence: vehemence is almost always mistaken for irascibility; and thus the novice, whilst disguising trepidation, is supposed to be betraying ill temper; and has fixed upon him the reputation, which is of all others the most disadvantageous to a statesman at the commencement of his career, — that of being hot-headed and overbearing.

Of debating societies those should be chosen for the pupil from which political topics are excluded; for if he were to take a part in political debates, he would be betrayed into a premature adoption and declaration of political sentiments; than which nothing will be more injurious to his character and fortunes in after life.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE AGE AT WHICH OFFICIAL AND PARLIAM- MENTARY LIFE SHOULD COMMENCE.

WHEN the student shall have attained to four and twenty years of age, more or less, the sooner he is in office the better; for it is there only that some essential processes of his education can be set on foot, and it is in youth only that they can be favourably effected. An early exercise of authority is, in the case of most men, necessary to give a capacity for taking decisions. It may be thought, perhaps, that whether he be a member of the government, or in active opposition to the government, he is still acquiring experience and practice in affairs. But a long experience of the latter kind, by habituating a man, not to taking decisions, but

to taking objections,—to finding difficulties, and not resources,—is apt to be fatal to his effectiveness as a statesman in the exercise of power. Men thus practised and otherwise unpractised, become timid from foreseeing all that can be urged against any measure they might adopt, and not feeling fertile in expedients. There may be a converse disadvantage in men entering upon office without having been practised in opposition ; but prudence is much more easily learnt than decisiveness : the former may be taught at any age, the latter only to the young.

Also the drudgery of an office should be encountered early, whilst the energy of youth is at its height, and can be driven through anything by the spur of novelty. Nor let any man suppose that he can come to be an adept in statesmanship, without having been at some period of his life a thorough-going drudge. Drudgery is not less necessary to teach pa-

tience and give a power over details to the statesman himself, than to enable him to understand the powers and measure the patience of those who are drudges in his service. And as "trifles make the sum of human things," so details make the substance of public affairs.

Further, at his first entrance into office he will have much to learn from those below him, and the younger he is the less he will feel the incongruities of receiving instruction from those whom it is his office to direct.

With respect to Parliament, it was a remark of the late Mr. Wilberforce, that men seldom succeeded in the House of Commons who had not entered it before thirty years of age. In order to apprehend the humours of so mixed a body, and to be in some sort of harmony with it, the quick impressibility of youth is required, and its powers of ready adaptation. It is by partly yielding to such humours that a statesman partly also governs them; and he who has

not been trained to the requisite pliancy will hardly possess himself of the plastic faculty which is its counterpart. If a man have the property of thus conforming himself without having been trained to it in youth, it will generally be found to be in him rather an infirmity than a power; for when a man has it by nature, and not by a guiding force put upon nature, it will be commonly accompanied by some want of constancy of mind and tenacity of purpose.

CHAPTER III.

A STATESMAN'S MOST PREGNANT FUNCTION LIES
IN THE CHOICE AND USE OF INSTRUMENTS.

THE most important qualification of one who is high in the service of the state is his fitness for acting *through others* ; since the importance of his operations vicariously effected ought, if he knows how to make use of his power, to predominate greatly over the importance which can attach to any man's direct and individual activity. The discovery and use of instruments implies, indeed, activity as well as judgment, because it implies that judgment which only activity in affairs can give. But it is a snare into which active statesmen are apt to fall, to lose, in the importance which they attach to the immediate and direct effects of their activity, the

sense of that much greater importance which they might impart to it if they applied themselves to make their powers operate through the most effective and the widest instrumentality. The vanity of a statesman is more flattered in the contemplation of what he does than of what he causes to be done; although any man whose civil station is high ought to know that his causative *might* be, beyond all calculation, wider than his active sphere, and more important.

Therefore no man who contemplates a public career should fail to begin early, and persist always, in cultivating the society of able men, of whatsoever classes or opinions they may be, provided only they be honest. In every walk of life it were well that such men should associate themselves together, in order that combination may give increased effect to their lives; and in some of the middle walks of life the association does to a certain degree take place; but amongst those who are destined for a civil

career, or are born to such a station in life as is likely to lead them into that career, the paramount importance of the object appears to be overlooked. Men in early life, seeking for enjoyment in society and for agreeable qualities only in their associates, their appetite for power yet unawakened, or their juvenile ambition anticipating the pleasures of power without foreseeing its wants, get themselves surrounded by companions who, though not perhaps unadorned with talents, are yet fit for no purposes in life but that of pleasing. At the entrance upon a public career, and in the first stages of it, the aspirant is not seasonably apprised by circumstances that this is against him, and that in his ascent and advancement, as he comes to have more and more scope and use for instruments, hardly anything would be of so much moment to him as the number and serviceable quality of his associates, or of those with whom he has such intermediate connection as

may serve for requisite knowledge. This, which early experience will not suggest, later will not teach in time (for the character of a man's associates will commonly be determined at the outset of life), and it is therefore a matter to be attempted by precept.

In associating with able men, we are to bear in mind that every man of that kind may probably indicate a vein of the material lying in the line of his connections. Blood relationship, we know, is but an uncertain index; yet it offers a sufficient probability of congenial talents to invite inquiry from the statesman who is duly eager in his search. And the chosen friends and companions of an able man are still more likely than his born relatives to be found endowed with similar gifts.

In order to realize his knowledge of instruments (otherwise soon dissipated in the hurry of his life), a statesman would do well to keep lists, inventories, or descriptive catalogues; one

of men ascertained to have certain aptitudes for business, another of probable men. He is more especially bound to keep lists of men whose services in any public capacity deservedly attract his attention in the course of business. Such services, not continuously rendered perhaps, and only casually observed, will, if not registered for reference, be either presently forgotten, or not remembered at the moment when the want of the man presents itself. In short, no easy opportunity should be omitted of trying and proving men, and of recording the result. But so little is this somewhat obvious truth recognised, or such is the indifference of some statesmen to every thing but what is forced upon their attention, that men have been at the head of departments of the state, who might have had Bacon and Hooker in their service without knowing it.

With regard to the choice of instruments, a statesman, if he would have his judgment of

men keen and discriminating, must keep it more on the watch than it is apt to be in the glare and crowd of public life. It is commonly considered that knowledge of mankind is to be obtained chiefly by experience of men and conversancy with society. Much, no doubt, is gained by this ; but it is not to be forgotten that something also is lost by it. “ The hand “ of little employment hath the daintier sense ;” and it should be observed that people who have been very much in contact with the world, generally become somewhat callous in their perceptive faculties. The traveller who sets foot in a country for the first time, is more alive to its peculiarities, and sees more, than the denizen ; and the fact will generally be found to be, that those who have above all others, “ a gift of “ genuine insight ” into men’s characters, are persons who, though they have seen something of the world from time to time, have lived for the most part in retirement. Men of

the world understand readily what is commonly met with amongst mankind; but they either do not see what is peculiar, or they are thrown out by it: and they profit little by slight traits; though slight traits, without being stretched too far, may often be improved by meditation into strong conclusions. Also, men in high station, from having less personal interest in the characters of others — being safe from them — are commonly less acute observers, and with their progressive elevation in life become, as more and more indifferent to what other men are, so more and more ignorant of them. The same principle may be traced in private life, where governesses and servants or other *dependents*, and women as being most dependent, are, in proportion to their faculties and means, the most watchful observers of character. It should be the care of a statesman to keep his curiosity alive, by carrying with him into society a sense of the public wants to which it is his

duty to administer, and considering the abilities of the available men whom he meets there, as the most precious portion of the public resources.

In our judgment of men, we are to beware of giving any great importance to occasional acts. By acts of occasional virtue weak men endeavour to redeem themselves in their own estimation, vain men to exalt themselves in that of mankind. It may be observed, that there are no men more worthless and selfish in the general tenour of their lives, than some who from time to time perform feats of generosity. Sentimental selfishness will commonly vary its indulgences in this way, and vainglorious selfishness will break out into acts of munificence. But self-government and self-denial are not to be relied upon for any real strength, except in so far as they are found to be exercised in detail.

Plausibilities and pretensions are the most

direct index to the defects of men. Where there is a merely negative demeanour and no assumption or aim at any thing, it may be difficult to discover what is wanting and what is not. But plausibilities, when they are not so successful as to be accredited, always betray a good deal; and they can scarcely be long successful where they are met by diligence of observation and an ordinary share of discernment. And even with those who do not set themselves deliberately to observe and discern, there is often an intuitive sense of unsoundness, which, if they have due confidence in it, will preserve them from being misled.

The arts of plausibility would not be practised with so much assurance and so little skill and caution, if plausible men were not more deceived than deceiving: but what they pretend to be, other men pretend to take them for. For men of the world, knowing that there are few things so unpopular as penetration, take

care to wear the appearance of being imposed upon ; and thus the man of plausibilities practises his art under the disadvantage of not knowing when he is detected, and what shallows to keep clear of for the future.

There is, however, one way in which plausibility may be attended with no inconsiderable success ; and that is, when the practitioner contrives to make himself a little known to a great many people, and much known only to a conniving few.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GETTING AND KEEPING OF
ADHERENTS.

It is of far greater importance to a statesman to make one friend who will hold out with him for twenty years, than to find twenty followers in each year, losing as many. For a statesman who stands upon a shifting ground of adherency, requires incessantly renewed calculation to inform him where he is as to means and powers ; and perpetual management at the hooking and dropping of dependencies ; and he must be always sacrificing his own unity of purpose, and the strength that he might derive from it, in order to avail himself of the varying support. But the qualities which will link on a score of loose followers, are more commonly found in

public life, than those which will attach one adherent; and that may be said of statesmen, which Dean Swift remarked of young ladies, — “that
“ it would be well if fewer of them learnt to
“ make nets, and more to make cages.”

A superiority, intrinsic or adventitious, which maintains itself without being arrogated or even asserted, is the first thing needful to one who would form and lead a party; and with this there should be not only friendliness, but also strength and truthfulness of character. Cajolery does but effect the purpose of the moment, and runs in debt to the future; whereas frank refusals, with a kindness of language measured by the just claims of the follower and the real intentions of the leader, even if they do produce an unreasonable discontent at the moment of disappointment, will lead to an enduring confidence, and occasion no continued estrangement on the part of any man whom it is desirable to attach. Excess of profession evinces weakness,

and weakness never conciliates political adhesion. Willing to befriend an adherent, but prepared to do without him, is what a leader should appear to be; and this appearance is best maintained by a light cordiality of demeanor towards him, and a more careful and effective attention to his interests than he has been led by that demeanor to anticipate. Give one example of expectations exceeded, of performance outrunning profession, and hope and confidence will live upon little for the future. On the contrary, after an example of performance falling short of profession, hope of the future will be kept alive by nothing but solids. Moreover, he who is profuse of professions obtains less gratitude than others, even when he fulfils them to the letter. For the professions men are not thankful, because they distrust them; for the fulfilments they are less thankful than they might be, because he appears to do what is done, merely to get out of a difficulty in which the professions

have entangled him : he could not do less, it is said.

Every favour which is conferred upon a follower, should appear to be bestowed, though willingly, yet with deliberation. For deliberation does not more lend aggravation to an act of malice, than it heightens the complexion of a service rendered. Favours which seem to be dispensed upon an impulse, with an unthinking facility, are received like the liberalities of a spendthrift, and men thank God for them.

A statesman should know with what followers not to encumber himself, as well as how to conciliate and attach eligible adherents. He cannot, indeed, be nice or choice as to the men whom he will number amongst his political friends; but he may be careful not to encourage, on the part of some of them, that close adhesion which converts supporters into claimants. Or if it be indispensable to him to accept services which no very high-minded or creditable ad-

herent could render, still he should be careful not to admit to personal intimacy those whom he thus employs; and he should teach them not to expect that they will be remunerated for low services with high offices. Shy and proud men (and shyness as well as pride is not infrequently to be found amongst English statesmen, little as it may seem to belong to their habits and station)—such men are more liable than any others to fall into the hands of parasites and creatures of low character. For in the intimacies which are formed by shy men, they do not choose, but are chosen. And as their shyness tends to distance men of high and delicate feelings, especially when the shyness is combined with power and results from pride, they generally fall a prey to gross and forward flatterers, whom they can despise sufficiently to be at their ease with them. Such is the pusillanimity of pride !

Even coldness of character, without pride or

shyness, will of itself tend to throw the head of a party into the closer connection with the more menial of his partisans. For the less menial will hold themselves more aloof, when they do not find the relation of political superiority to come qualified and recommended to them by feelings of personal friendliness.

It is less desirable to be surrounded and served by men of a shallow cleverness and slight character, than by men of even less talent who are of sound and stable character. A statesman will be brought into fewer difficulties and dilemmas by men of the latter class, and will be more easily excused for befriending them beyond their merits. They will be creditable to him in one way, if not in another; and their advancement, bringing less envy upon themselves, will reflect less odium upon their patron: whereas much ill-will and contempt will commonly accompany the ad-

vancement of men whose talents have been sufficient to push them forward in life, but inadequate to command respect in the absence of other pretensions to respectability.

It is but an infelicitous alternative, however, to be obliged to choose from either of these classes, when important offices are to be filled ; to be compelled to turn from the flimsy man of talent, to the dull respectable man. The latter may pass current with the world ; for in the world a man will often be reputed to be a man of sense, only because he is not a man of talent ; and in the world, too, he who is taken to be a man of sense, is taken to be equal to all the functions of a statesman ; he is supposed to be "*par negotiis*," because he is "*haud suprà*." But good sense, which is an abundant provision, and not a common one, for the purposes of private life, and in public life essential as one constituent quality, does by no means of itself make up a sufficiency of endow-

ment for conducting the affairs of a country. It is only, therefore, to the worse alternative of talent without seriousness and worth, that sense without ability is to be preferred.

But if there be in the character not only sense and soundness, but virtue of a high order, then, however little appearance there may be of *talent*, a certain portion of *wisdom* may be relied upon almost implicitly. For the correspondencies of wisdom and goodness are manifold; and that they will accompany each other is to be inferred, not only because men's wisdom makes them good, but also because their goodness makes them wise. Questions of right and wrong are a perpetual exercise of the faculties of those who are solicitous as to the right and wrong of what they do and see; and a deep interest of the heart in these questions carries with it a deeper cultivation of the understanding than can be easily effected by any other excitement to intellectual activity.

Although, therefore, simple goodness does not imply every sort of wisdom, it unerringly implies some essential conditions of wisdom; it implies a negative on folly, and an exercised judgment within such limits as Nature shall have prescribed to the capacity. And where virtue and extent of capacity are combined, there is implied the highest wisdom, being that which includes the worldly wisdom with the spiritual.

A statesman who numbers the wise and good amongst his political friends, men of sense and respectability amongst his adherents; who demeans himself in a spirit of liberal but disengaged good-will towards his ordinary partisans, and holds himself towards his tools in no reciprocity of that relation; who enlists in the public service all the capable men he can find, and renders them available to the extent of their capabilities, all other men's jealousies notwithstanding, and any jealousy of his own

out of the question;—such a statesman has already, in the commonwealth of his own nature, given to the nobler functions the higher place; and as a minister, therefore, he is one whom his country may be satisfied to trust, and its best men be glad to serve. He, on the other hand, who sees in the party he forms only the pedestal of his own statue, or the plinth of a column to be erected to his honour, may, by inferior means and lower service, accomplish his purposes, such as they are; but he must be content with vulgar admiration, and lay out of account the respect of those who will reserve that tribute from what is merely powerful, and render it only to what is great. “He that seeketh to be eminent amongst able men,” says Lord Bacon, “hath a great task; but that is ever good for the public. But he that plots to be the only figure amongst ciphers, is the decay of a whole age.”

CHAPTER V.

IN THE CHOICE OF MEN HOW FAR LITERARY
MERIT MAY BE A GUIDE.

GENERALLY speaking, serviceable talents may be inferred from literary merit in the young, not in the old, and but doubtfully in the middle-aged. The talents which are evinced in literature may be turned to the purposes of business, provided their application that way is seasonably determined; before literary objects, enjoyments, and habits of thinking have fixed themselves upon the mind. But the confirmed enthusiast in literature will not make a man of business; nor the confirmed literary voluptuary; nor perhaps he who has been long accustomed to thinking for thinking's sake. Men so accus-

tomed, when reduced to the operations of business, will be apt to value the thought above the purpose.

Of the departments of literature, the imaginative and the philosophic are the worst schools for business, if the mind have been long and exclusively devoted to them.

To him who has long dwelt in his imagination the world will often be "a stage, and all the men and women merely players." But it happens still more frequently, when the sensitiveness which is the ordinary concomitant of a lively imagination is not counteracted, and the mind fortified by other faculties duly exercised, that of all men and women the man of imagination is the most a player, and also that of all players he is the least expert. His fancy suggests to him a hundred parts which he would desire to play in life, no one of which possibly may be compatible with another, or easily to be reconciled with his na-

ture and early habits. For example, it is the nature of the imaginative temperament, cultivated by the arts, to undermine the courage; and by abating strength of character to render men easily subservient,—“sequaces, cereos, et ad mandata imperii ductiles.” But, on the other hand, imagination and books suggest to him that it is a noble thing to be independent; and thus, stumbling between his temperament and his fancy, he becomes awkwardly and irresolutely contumacious. By many such incongruities the coherency and drift of the natural man is broken, he is abroad in his purposes, and unfit for business. Further, an imaginative man is apt to see, in his life, the story of his life; and is thereby led to conduct himself in life in such a manner as to make a good story of it rather than a good life, and make himself what he conceives to be interesting, rather than what will be generally acknowledged to be useful and convenient.

And the independent thinking of persons who have trained and habituated themselves to philosophic freedom of opinion, is also unfavourable to statesmanship; because the business of a statesman is less with truth at large than with truths commonly received. The philosopher should have a leaning *from* prescription, in order to counterbalance early prepossessions and place the mind *in equilibrio*: the statesman on the contrary should have a leaning towards it. Having to act always with others, through others, and upon others, and those others for the most part *vulgus hominum*, his presumptions should be in favour of such opinions as are likely to be shared by others; and the arguments should be cogent and easily understood which shall induce him to quit the beaten track of doctrine. His object should be, first to go with the world as far as it will carry him; and from that point taking his start to go farther if he can, but always as much as may be in the

same direction, that is guided by a reference to common ways of thinking.

I speak, be it observed, of men grown old in an exclusive devotion to imaginative and philosophical literature. Fancy and abstract reflection, duly counterpoised and kept within bounds, will both be of use in the transaction of public business; and he can never be more than a second-rate statesman into whose conduct of affairs philosophy and imagination do not in some degree enter.

Without imagination, indeed, there can be no just and comprehensive philosophy; and without this there can be no true wisdom in dealing with practical affairs of a wide and complex nature. The imaginative faculty is essential to the seeing of many things from one point of view, and to the bringing of many things to one conclusion. It is necessary to that fluency of the mind's operations which mainly contributes to its clearness. And finally

it is necessary to bring about those manifold sympathies with various kinds of men in various conjunctures of circumstance, through which alone an active observation and living knowledge of mankind can be generated.

CHAPTER VI.

OF OFFICIAL STYLE.

LITERARY men, and the young still more than the old of this class, have commonly a good deal to rescind in their style in order to adapt it to business. But the young, if they be men of sound abilities, will soon learn what is not apt and discard it; which the old will not. The leading rule is to be content to be common-place, — a rule which might be observed with advantage in other writings, but is distinctively applicable to these. Any point of style is to be avoided by a statesman which gives reason to suppose that he is thinking more of his credit than of his business. It belongs to high station to rest upon its advan-

tages, and by no means to court the notice of inferiors or to be solicitous of effect. *Their* interests should engross the thoughts of the statesman, and he should appear to have no occasion for any other credit than that of duly regarding their welfare. His style therefore, though it should have the correctness and clearness which education and practice impart to the writing of a man of good understanding, should not evince any solicitous precision beyond what may be due to exactitude in the subject-matter, much less any ambition of argument for its own sake, and less still of ornament or pungency in like manner gratuitous. If he be a man of philosophic mind, philosophy will enter into his views and enlarge and enlighten them; but it will be well that it should not ostensibly manifest itself in his writing, because he has to address himself, not to philosophers but to ordinary men; who are ever of the opinion (erroneous though it be) that

what they recognise to be philosophy is not fit for common use. A statesman's philosophy, therefore, should be as it were foundations sunk in the ground, and should not overtly appear, except in so far as it may be made to take the form of trite and popular maxims. With respect to ornament and figures of speech, it is to be observed that all language whatsoever carries metaphor within it ; though much that is metaphorical may not be cognisably so to those who do not probe and search it and see into the sources of its meanings. The customariness of many metaphorical uses of words makes us unconscious of their metaphor ; and the care of a statesman should be to avoid express metaphors (as well as express philosophy), and use only such as lie hid in common language, and will not attract specific notice. Yet since much of the force and propriety of language depends upon a reference, conscious or unconscious, to its metaphorical

basis, the exclusion of metaphorical invention does not negative such an exercise of imagination as shall detect the latent metaphors of language, and so deal with them as to give to the style a congruity and aptitude otherwise unattainable.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE INFERENCES OF MERIT OR DEMERIT
FROM POPULARITY, AND SOMETHING CONCERN-
ING FALSE REPUTATIONS.

POPULARITY (I speak of social and personal not political popularity) till it be traced to its sources is no more than a slight presumption either way ; but so far as it is a ground of judgment at all, it is against a man ; because the defects which ordinarily accompany it are more essential than the merits. Hardly any man obtains popularity without desiring and seeking it, or without making some sacrifices for it. It is most commonly obtained by an abuse of humility, and a large indulgence for all qualities and proceedings which are not denounced as flagitious by the society to which a man belongs.

I say an abuse of humility, because humility well used consists in a constant reference to a high standard and a prostration of pride and self-love before that standard, whether it be merely ideal, or whether we see it embodied in men of virtue and understanding superior to our own : and it does *not* consist in any undue and untrue self-depreciation, leading a man to postpone himself to what is worse than himself, and thereby to desert his moral station.

One of the doctrines of this popular humility is much the same with that which Machiavelli ascribes to the Romish Church in his time — the doctrine, “*come è male del male dir male.*” There is a better doctrine which teaches that men are not only the subjects, but the instruments, of God’s moral government. The judgments of the street and of the market-place, the sentences which men pronounce upon each other in the ordinary intercourse of life, constitute the most essential of all social jurisdic-

tions, and he who would serve the great Law-giver with fidelity must carry the sword of justice in his mouth. A righteous humility will teach a man never to pass a censure in a spirit of exultation ; a righteous courage will teach him never to withhold it from fear of being disliked. Popularity is commonly obtained by a dereliction of the duties of censure under a pretext of humility.

There are other ways in which statesmen may obtain popularity, which are not better. Easiness of access contributes greatly to a man's popularity, and in the case of a statesman in office detracts proportionably from his utility. Accessibility is, in men so circumstanced, sometimes a mode of idleness as well as an aim at popularity ; and whether it be the one or the other, or proceed from pure good nature, or be adopted from a mistaken sense of duty, it equally involves the neglect of those functions and habits to which it is of most consequence to the public

that their servant should devote himself. The statesman who is easy of access will not only squander his time ; he will commonly be found to sacrifice the distant to the near, public to individual interests, and matters of no light importance to the ill-considered smile of the moment. It is not in human nature that a statesman should not desire to satisfy the man whom he sees and who sees him, in preference to the unembodied name or idea of a man who is separated from him by lands or seas ; or that he should not prefer the interests of the man who is there, to those of the multitude which is an abstraction ; nor is it in human nature that such preference should not taint the justness of his judgments with partiality. Social popularity in a statesman therefore (connected with easiness of access) may reasonably suggest a suspicion of some such taint, of some idle waste or injudicious employment of time, of some disregard or erroneous estimate of the relative

value of topics, of using (so to speak) false weights and measures in his dealings with his duties.

Yet easiness of access will generally raise to a man a reputation the very reverse of that presumptive inference (I will call it no more) which ought to be deduced from it. He who allows himself to be interrupted every hour of the day, will be applauded for his assiduity and attention to business. Interviews, indeed, make a show of transacting business; but (as I shall presently take occasion to explain) business is seldom really and usefully transacted otherwise than in writing. Whilst, therefore, the popular statesman, ready at all hours to receive all applicants, open to hear every side of the question with his own ears, flatters with a listening look, or imposes with a look of reserved fulness, and thus sends from his presence twenty trumpeters of his merit in a day, the questions to which this show of attention has been given, will com-

monly be disposed of by the obscure industry of some person who studies the papers relating to them.

The late Mr. Wilberforce may be adduced as an example of pre-eminence popularity obtained without labour or sacrifice, though, let it be admitted, with great merit of other kinds. Mr. Southey once said of him, that if other men had the milk of human kindness he had the cream of it. This, with a winning amenity of manner, peculiar grace and fervour in conversation and an easy eloquence in public speaking, planted him the foremost of his party in the eyes of mankind, and placed his name in the title-page (as it were) of a great cause. But Mr. Zachary Macaulay was the man who rose and took pen in hand at four o'clock in the morning—who was (if I may be allowed to speak in parallels) the Dumont to his Mirabeau.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING INTERVIEWS.

To those who are not practically acquainted with business, it may appear that in the foregoing chapter I have undervalued that species of activity which consists in giving ready audience. Upon certain occasions, no doubt, interviews may have their use, and some contribution, though it will be rather ancillary than essential, may be made by them to the transaction of particular sorts of business. A statesman should make himself personally acquainted with those with whom he has dealings, so often as he has reason to suppose that they are men of any eminent qualifications; especially if he have the faculty of measuring men by the eye and the ear. And this is a faculty which he

ought to possess and to cultivate. "Fronti
" nulla fides" is a maxim of only partial ap-
plicability. To trust the judgment in matters
of aspect and demeanor may belong to the folly
of fools ; but it is not less a part of wisdom in
the wise. Statesmen, therefore, who justly at-
tribute to themselves some sagacity of this kind,
should be accessible on occasions when it can
be turned to account. And some other pur-
poses might be specified, for which interviews
are preferable to communication in writing.
But these are the exceptions and they are not
numerous. In the great majority of affairs
oral communication is either prejudicial or
nugatory.

For it should be remembered that in every
question there are two or more parties interested.
A large portion of the questions which come
before a minister, arise out of disputes and com-
plaints on which it is his business to *adjudicate*.
His functions in these cases are quasi-judicial.

His office is for these purposes a Court of Justice, and ought to be a Court of Record. Every step of his procedure, and every ground upon which he rests every step, should appear upon the face of producible documents. The administration of justice in these cases cannot be aided by interlocutory argument with one party present and doors closed; nor will circumstances often permit that all parties should have equal opportunities of access. The public may be also a party interested, and no pleading voice claims to be heard on its behalf. Again, statements are made which must unavoidably, though perhaps insensibly, produce impressions, and to which nevertheless the party making them is not deliberately and responsibly committed. Further, no statesman, be he as discreet as he may, will escape having ascribed to him, as the result of interviews, promises and understandings which it was not his purpose to convey; and yet in a short time he will be un-

able to recollect what was said with sufficient distinctness to enable him to give a confident contradiction. So much as to the evils and injustice which will often arise from interviews.

Next as to their uselessness. In the rapid succession of topics which chase each other through the mind of a minister of state, especially of one who grants many interviews, words spoken are for the most part as evanescent as those which are written on the running stream, "*Delentque pedum vestigia caudâ.*" But even if he should recollect what has been said for a day or two with sufficient precision to give effect to it in business, that effect must be given by writing; and to think that a minister who gives frequent audiences can himself write, and that at once and without choice of time, on many or even on a few of the questions brought before him in those audiences, is to indulge an expectation which not one minister in fifty will be found able to fulfil. And when

one man hears what is to be said concerning a case, whilst another writes what is to be written on it, not hastily is it to be believed that the one operation will have much reference to the other.

Again, let it be considered in what frame of mind, from one cause or another, most of those are who seek these interviews. Suitors and claimants are the most numerous class. It may be supposed that the interests which they have, or conceive themselves to have, at stake—the importance to themselves of the objects which they have in view — would infallibly induce such parties as these at least, to take the utmost pains beforehand to make the interviews which they seek available to them. Yet most men who have been in office will have observed with how little preparation of their own minds even this class of persons do commonly present themselves to profit by the audience which they have solicited. One man is

humble and ignorant of the world, has never set eyes on a minister before, and acts as if the mere admission to the presence of such a personage was all that was needful, which being accomplished he must naturally flourish ever after. Another is romantic and sanguine, his imagination is excited, and he has thought that he can do every thing by some happy phrase or lively appeal, which, in the embarrassment of the critical moment, escapes his memory, or finds no place, or the wrong place, in the conversation. A third brings a letter of introduction from some person who is great in *his* eyes but possibly inconsiderable in those of the minister; he puts his trust in the recommendation and appears to expect that the minister should suggest to him, rather than he to the minister, what is the particular object to be accomplished for him; he “lacks advancement,” and that, he thinks, is enough said. A fourth has not made up his mind how high he shall

pitch his demands; he is afraid on the one hand to offend by presumption, on the other to lose by diffidence; he proposes, therefore, to feel his way and be governed by what the minister shall say to him; but the minister naturally has nothing to say to him — never having considered the matter and taking no interest in it. Thus it is that, through various misconceptions, the instances will be found in practice to be a minority, in which a claimant or suitor who obtains an interview has distinctly made up his mind as to the specific thing which he will ask, propose, or state. Still less does he forecast the several means and resources, objections and difficulties, conditions and stipulations, which may happen to be topics essential to a full development and consideration of his case.

In short it may be affirmed as a truth well-founded in observation, though perhaps hardly to be credited upon assertion, that even in

matters personally and seriously affecting themselves, 'most men will put off thinking definitively till they have to act, to write, or to speak. There is no reason why the time of a minister should be employed in listening to the extempore crudities of men who are thus trusting themselves to the fortune of the moment.

The precepts which (resting upon these remarks) may be offered as to this matter of interviews, are the following : —

1st. A minister may not improperly allot two hours a day of two days in each week, to the purposes of such interviews as may be admitted (under the head of exceptions) to be not unprofitably granted ; and of such also as, though they be otherwise unprofitable, are yet of advantage on the account of courtesy and of sparing needless unpopularity. By appointing all persons who seek interviews to come within these hours, the very fulness of the minister's

ante-chamber will evince, to each man who comes, the absurdity of expecting to occupy much of the attention which is to be shared out to so many. Of those who wait, the exceptions or reasonable applicants for interviews should be first called in ; and after these are disposed of, perhaps the minister may venture to give orders that those who are only admitted for courtesy's sake should be ushered into his presence in succession, at intervals of five minutes, so that the entrance of one shall be the signal for the other to withdraw. Care must of course be taken not to put the rule in practice indiscriminately, in cases where extra-civility is of any special importance.

2d. All applicants for interviews should be required to send in on the day preceding that on which they are appointed to attend, a paper setting forth, as definitely as may be, the object which they seek and the facts which they have to state, with exact notes of reference to the

dates of any correspondence which may have previously taken place upon the subject in question, and a *précis* of such correspondence.

3d. A minister would do well to have placarded in his ante-chamber a notice in the following or some similar form: — “Owing to
“the many inconveniences which have arisen
“to the public from oral communications being
“misunderstood or incorrectly remembered,
“A. B. thinks it his duty to apprise those who
“may do him the honour to attend him upon
“business, that he will in no case hold himself,
“his colleagues, or his successors, bound by
“words spoken, unless when they shall have
“been subsequently reduced to writing and
“authenticated in that form.”

4th. I would suggest a matter of management in the disposition of the furniture in a minister's room, which may appear at first sight to be more trifling than it is in reality. The furniture should be so arranged as that the

chair which is placed for a stranger, without being ungraciously distant from the minister, should be as near as may be to the door. Timid and embarrassed men will sit as if they were rooted to the spot, when they are conscious that they have to traverse the length of a room in their retreat. And in every case an interview will find a more easy and pleasing termination, when the door is at hand as the last words are spoken. These are not frivolous considerations where civility is the business to be transacted.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING THE CONSCIENCE OF A STATESMAN.

THE conscience of a statesman should be rather a strong conscience than a tender conscience. For a conscience of more tenderness than strength will be liable in public life to be perverted in two ways:—1st. By reflecting responsibilities disproportionately to their magnitude, and missing of the large responsibilities whilst it is occupied with the small. 2d. By losing in a too lively apprehension of the responsibilities of action, the sense of responsibility for inaction.

No doubt the most perfect conscience would be that which should have all strength in its

tenderness, all tenderness in its strength; and be equally adapted to public and private occasions. But I speak of the consciences of men as they exist with their imperfect capacities, bearing in mind the truth “ut multæ virtutes
“in vitia degenerant, et quod magis est, sæpe
“videas eosdem affectus, pro temporum sorte,
“nunc virtutes esse, nunc vitia.”* And these dilemmas of virtue duly considered, it will be found to be better for the public interests that a statesman should have some hardihood, than much weak sensibility of conscience.

1st. As to the *mismeasurements* of a conscience tender to weakness. Take the case of a sentence of death to be executed or remitted, according to the decision to be adopted by a statesman under the direction of this kind of conscience. The responsibility as regards the criminal and the responsibility as regards the

* J. Barclaii Argenis.

public, will each of them lie as a serious burthen on a sore back. But the former of them will, with such a conscience, have an undue preponderance. To decide erroneously that a man had better die, will appear a worse thing than to decide more erroneously that he had better live; and human guilt and misery, which are to be the consequence of the error mis-called merciful, will appear of less account than human life; though to a strong conscience and a just judgment mere human life would be of less account, human innocence and happiness of more. Moreover whilst this question of an individual's life or death swings backwards and forwards in the conscience of the statesman, it probably keeps off from his conscience other questions, which, though not of the same immediate and tangible character, may nevertheless involve in their consequences numerous lives and deaths, numerous crimes and punishments. So difficult is it, in situations where the duties

are diverse and momentous, for a very susceptible conscience to be true to itself.

2d. As to the conscience becoming, from an exceeding tenderness as to acts and deeds, too insensible on the point of inaction or delay. It is very certain that there may be met with, in public life, a species of conscience which is all bridle and no spurs. A statesman whose conscience is of the finest texture as to every thing which he does, will sometimes make no conscience of doing nothing. His conscience will be liable to become to him as a quagmire, in which the faculty of action shall stick fast at every step. And to this tendency of the conscience the worldly interests of a statesman will pander. Conscience is, in most men, an anticipation of the opinions of others; and whatever the moral responsibility may be, official responsibility is much less apt to be brought home to a statesman in cases of error by inaction, than in the contrary cases. What men

might have done is less known than what they have actually done, and the world thinks so much less of it, and with so much less definiteness and confidence of opinion, that the sins of omission are sins on the safe side as to this world's responsibilities.

Above all it is to be wished, that the conscience of a statesman should be an intelligent and perspicacious conscience — not the conscience of the heart only, but the conscience of the understanding—that wheresoever the understanding should be enabled to foresee distant consequences or comprehend wide ones, there the conscience should be enabled to follow, not failing in quickness because the good or evil results in question are less palpable and perhaps less certain than in private life, are not seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, but only known through meditation and foresight. Many magnify in words the importance of public duties, but few appreciate them in feel-

ing ; and that, not so much for want of feeling, as for want of carrying it out to whatever results the understanding reaches. It is impossible that the feeling in regard to public objects should be *proportionate* to the feeling for private ones, because the human heart is not large enough ; and it is too often found that when the conscience is not sustained by a sense of due proportion it gets thrown out altogether. It sometimes happens that he who would not hurt a fly will hurt a nation.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE AGE AT WHICH A STATESMAN
SHOULD MARRY, AND WHAT MANNER OF WO-
MAN HE SHOULD TAKE TO WIFE.

LIFE without marriage and its fruits, is to a statesman, as well as to men of other callings, a sad anti-climax. Let him not then, in the florid exordium of life, forget the peroration; which must fall flat indeed, if the likeness of his youth be not renewed and multiplied about him in the fruits of marriage. "When the Lord was with me, when my children were about me" — in this co-presence consists the beatitude of age: and as it is the part of a statesman to be provident and far-seeing, he should remember in the season of his youth to provide that his age shall

be passed in this company. His profession throws some difficulties in his way; but so does every other; each presenting some obstacles and some facilities peculiar to itself.

His dilemma is, that *whilst in office* he has not leisure to range widely and choose his object discreetly, or sedulously to seek and pursue it: and *when out of office* he has less of worldly advantage for the pursuit.

Upon the whole he will do best to marry — not indeed *in primâ lanugine*, since sobriety and perspicacity of judgment in such matters is not to be expected from a youth — but nevertheless at an early period of manhood, and if possible before or very soon after the commencement of his public career. Whilst unmarried, he will be liable, in whatever conjuncture of affairs or exigency of business, to some amorous seizure, some accident of misplaced or ill-timed love, by which his mind will be taken away from his duties. Against these casualties,

which may happen to a statesman howsoever devoted to political life, marriage will be the least imperfect protection ; for business does but lay waste the approaches to the heart, whilst marriage garrisons the fortress.

And if early marriage be desirable for a statesman to guard him against the irruptions of passion, the peaceable attachment by which this is effected, is not less to be sought for its own sake. His marriage is not only to compose the heart and disenchant the fancy, but also to exercise the affections ; which are in a way to be corrupted and extinguished if political life be not conjoined with domestic. Nothing can compete with the interests of political life except the attractions of a pleasant home or extreme excitements ; and if the one alternative be wanting the other will be resorted to. A statesman's almost incessant engagements hardly admit, unless upon the call of passion, any other occupants of his affections than such as being inmates

of his house, fall, as it were, into the chinks of his time.

Let no man suppose that his character is strong and high enough to resist the influence of a lower character in a wife. The apparent advantages of men over women in the conjugal relation, are of an insidious tendency so far as the character is concerned, and the inequality in that particular is the reverse of what it seems. An inferior man, carrying his ends by authority, will often pass clear of his wife's character; whereas an inferior woman, to carry her objects, must work through the character of her husband. A statesman, knowing that his character is obvious to many poisons abroad, should choose such a wife as would invest it with a charmed life, instead of a Dejanira's robe.

A woman who *idolizes* her husband, if she do not hurt his character, will at least not help it. But in most cases she will hurt it very seriously. For domestic flattery is the most dangerous of

all flatteries. The wife who praises and blames, persuades and resists, warns or exhorts upon occasion given, and carries her love through all with a strong heart and not a weak fondness, — she is the true helpmate.

Ambition being almost the vocation of a statesman, he must be expected to marry ambitiously. But if he be as wise as one of his calling should be, he will not be precluded by objects of ambition from considering other objects along with them. On the contrary, since with the young ambition is a less over-ruling passion than love, he will probably take a greater variety of objects into the contemplation of his choice, than they who are more amorously directed. Wealth is of great importance to a statesman, because it gives independence, and (what is almost of as much consequence) the reputation of independence. Therefore, if he be not wealthy by inheritance, he should endeavour to secure wealth by marriage. Along

with this, he should seek for such qualities in a wife as will tend to make his home as much as may be a place of repose, and his life within doors the reverse of that which he leads elsewhere. To this end his wife should at least have sense enough or worth enough (and where there is no absolute defect of understanding worth amounts to sense) to exempt him from trouble in the management of his children and of his private affairs, and more especially to exempt him from all possibility of debt. She should also be pleasing to his eyes and to his taste: the taste goes deep into the nature of all men; love is hardly love apart from it; and in a life of political care and excitement, that home which is not the seat of love cannot be a place of repose; rest for the brain and peace for the spirit being only to be had through the softening of the affections. He should look for a clear understanding, cheerfulness, and alacrity of mind, rather than gaiety or brilliancy; and for a gentle

tenderness of disposition in preference to an impassioned nature. Lively talents are too stimulating in a tired man's house, passion is too disturbing. Nor is it necessary that a statesman's wife should have such knowledge or abilities as would enable her to be a party to his daily political interests and occupations. When a woman gives her mind that way, she becomes best acquainted with what is least respectable in politics—their personalities. It will be better for a statesman that such topics should be strangers in his house and unwelcome; that so he may be under the less temptation to desecrate his fireside. In the society of his wife he should find that fulness of rest which only a change in the direction of his thoughts can give. A lesson to this purpose may be taken from nature. He who is in the habit of recollecting his dreams will find that the topics of the day are seldom pursued in the dreams of the night next succeeding, unless under circumstances

tending to turn nature from her course; for were it so the night would not bring that entire relief and recess which it is designed to afford: with a like design it will be expedient that the domestic intercourse of a statesman should alternate with his business, and not mix with it.

But whilst standing apart from the details and aloof from the personalities of political life, a woman may be nevertheless very strongly imbued with principles of that height and generality in which moral, religious, and political interests meet: and to have a wife who should be imbued with such principles, and endowed with a capability of applying them upon great and fit occasions, will be of inestimable service to a statesman. For then, in addition to the cooling and refreshing of his spirit, he will have his grasp of his principles invigorated by association with a mind accustomed to view things in peace and without compromise. It is true the sentiments of the wife may be too

abstract, and not sufficiently modified by a reference to practicability : but the husband can more easily make any requisite deductions on this score, than he can repair the ravage which his character may undergo from the want of something in the nature of a living inflexible canon wherewith to compare his own persuasions, warped in the stress and pressure of perpetual combat.

Finally, it will be well that the wife of a statesman's choice should be sound in health and of a light and easy temper, neither jealous herself nor giving cause for jealousy ; neither going much abroad nor requiring her husband to be more at home than his avocations permit ; fresh in her feelings and alert as to her understanding, but seasonable in the demonstration of either, and willing at all times to rest contented in an intelligent repose. Her love should be —

A love that clings not, nor is exigent,
Encumbers not the active purposes,
Nor drains their source ; but proffers with free grace
Pleasure at pleasure touched at pleasure waived,
A washing of the weary traveller's feet,
A quenching of his thirst, a sweet repose
Alternate and preparative ; in groves
Where loving much the flower that loves the shade,
And loving much the shade that that flower loves,
He yet is unbewildered, unenslaved,
Thence starting light and pleasantly let go
When serious service calls.

to tarry and repose themselves for a while. This, if it were only by exercising the statesman's powers of self-government, of intention and remission in business, of putting the mind on and taking it off, would be a practice well paid; for it is to these powers that he must owe his exemption from the dangers to mind, body and business, of continued nervous excitement: But to a statesman of a high order of intellect, such intermissions of labour will yield a further profit; they will tend to preserve in him some remains of such philosophic or meditative faculties as may have been set aside by public life. One who shall have been deeply imbued in his early years with the love of meditative studies, will find that in any such hour of tranquillity which he shall allow himself, the recollection of them will spring up in his mind with a light and spiritual emanation, in like manner (to resume the similitude) as a

bubble of air springs from the bottom of the
stayed waters —

“ Ingenii redeunt fructus, aliique labores,

“ Et vitæ pars nulla perit ; quodcunque recedit

“ Litibus, incumbit studiis, animusque vicissim

“ Aut curam imponit populis, aut otia Musis.”

Claudian. Theod. Paneg.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING CERTAIN POINTS OF PRACTICE.

As fast as papers are received, the party who is to act upon them should examine them so far as to ascertain whether any of them relate to business which requires immediate attention, and should then separate and arrange them. But once so arranged, so that he knows to what subject of what urgency each paper or bundle relates, he should not again suffer himself to look at a paper or handle it, except in the purpose and with the determination to go through with it and dispatch the affair. For the practice of looking at papers and handling them without disposing of them, not only wastes the time so employed, but breeds an undue im-

pression of difficulty and trouble as connected with them ; and the repetition of acts of postponement on any subject tends more and more to the subjugation of the active power in relation to it. Moreover it will be desirable to act upon a paper or bundle whilst it looks fresh ; for it will become uninteresting if the eye have got accustomed to it lying aside, and absolutely repulsive if it have assumed a dusty, obsolete, and often postponed appearance.

A man of business should accustom himself, when there is no other ground of priority, to deal first with the question of the greatest difficulty, being that which most requires to be encountered in the bloom of novelty, with the unblunted edge of conscious energy. This is a precept of which fewer examples than might be wished are to be found in practice ; but it will always be most practised by the ablest men. Men, on the other hand, who feel themselves unequal to great questions, may commonly be

observed to fly at the smaller ones which lie in any way within their province, and satisfy themselves that they are fulfilling their duties by disposing of all these, until they shall *have time* to undertake the momentous and complex affairs : whereas their duty would be to devolve upon others, or even utterly neglect (if it could not be helped) the easy and less important matters, and thereby make time for the great ; and they probably would do so, if they were not conscious that when they should have made the time, they would be unable to make use of it in a satisfactory manner. And this transaction of petty business to the postponement of the more momentous, satisfies the consciences of such men, because men's conceptions of the relative importance of great objects are generally defective in proportion to their defect of ability to deal with them. The importance of objects on which men are diligently and efficaciously employed grows large in their eyes,

and they acquire no lively sense of the importance of the objects which they merely magnify in words, and pass by in the transaction of business.

Lord Bacon alleges, “ut homines literati sint
“ omnium minime defatigabiles, si modò res sit
“ hujusmodi ut animum pro dignitate ejus im-
“ pleat et detineat.” If he had said men of capacity, instead of men of letters, the assertion would have been as true of all times, as it was of his own age, when men of letters *were* men of capacity — that is, more universally and eminently so than they have been since.

Amongst old official men the point of practice most valued is conformity to standing rules and regulations. They are accustomed, with too much regard to their own convenience and too little to the specialties of cases, to insist upon adherence to system or precedent, called by euphemismus adherence to principle; and so called by men who do not pretend to know

the reasons for the system or precedent to which they would conform. It is no doubt an excellent thing to be guided by general rules founded upon reason; but unless we know and bear in mind the reason upon which they are founded, it will be frequently impossible to determine justly whether the case to which the rule is applied, be not one which it is the duty of the minister to take the trouble of considering separately and independently. As often as such cases occur, it will be proper to consider their special circumstances, with a view not only to dispose carefully and justly of the particular case, but also to see whether it may not help us to recast and improve the general rule. For administrative regulations, like other laws, require to be frequently revised and codified, as the experience of their operation is extended.

In high and important spheres of action, though general rules will be for the most part of great use in evading or setting aside per-

sonal questions, yet personal individualities may, from time to time, be of such moment as to make it well worth while to set aside the general rule on account of them. Persons of pre-eminent abilities when they appear, should have scope for their abilities at almost any sacrifice of system and regularity; and such sacrifice of *money* as can be required on such occasions, is a consideration infinitely unworthy to be estimated. The government or nation which should forego the services of highly gifted men, because the place and provision to be made for them would not be according to rule, is to be commended for no other regularity than that which should make hay by the almanack, — for no other thrift than that which should let the meat spoil to save the salt.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON OFFICIAL CRITICISM.

HE who objects to what is proposed or written in the transaction of business, should consider himself under an obligation to propose and execute something to be substituted; for every political measure is in the nature of an alternative, and is not to be pronounced good or bad, except as it is better or worse than some other equally definite course of proceeding which might be adopted instead of it. Moreover the trouble of maturing an alternative is no more than a proper curb upon the indulgence of a spirit of crude criticism.

Also the hand which executes a measure should belong to the head which propounds it; otherwise the hand, if an unassenting one, will

carry an advantage over the head : and even if willing, it will not be fully correspondent. The vitality of a measure turns full as much upon the punctum solvens as upon the punctum saliens ; and there will commonly be something infirm and halting about any measure which is devised by one man and executed by another ; or (for it amounts nearly to the same thing) any measure of which the execution is conclusively revised and corrected by another than its author. “ Nel consultare e governar le “ cose della corona e stato di Francia,” says Sansovino, “ sempre intervengono in maggior “ parte i Prelati ; e gli altri signori non se ne “ curano, perche sanno che le essecutione hanno “ ad esser fatte da loro.” For wise men have always perceived that the execution of political measures is in reality the essence of them, and that the course of things will almost inevitably run counter to the separation of the operative function from the deliberative.

These objections, however, lie only against *authoritative* criticism ; and that which is merely suggestive, to be taken quantum valeat or at will rejected by the author of the measure or the document, may be of great advantage ; especially if that author be neither pertinacious nor diffident, but prepared to weigh his own judgment against his critic's in an even balance with a steady hand. It follows that official criticism is chiefly valuable when exercised by the inferior functionary upon the work of the superior, who will be enabled to weigh the comment undisturbed by deference for the authority of the commentator.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE ARTS OF RISING.

It is not exactly the same arts that are adapted to the different stages of a man's ascent. Climbing the bole of the tree, a man clings with all his arms and legs, and lays hold of every knob and sliver. When he mounts amongst the branches, it should be with a more easy alacrity. A man will often be apt at the one operation, yet awkward at the other. Nor is it, indeed, common to meet with a man of such a character as can be carried from a low condition of life through successive ascents, with an aptitude for every condition into which he passes ; and thus it is that men who rise well will often stand infirmly. But for want of due consideration

being given to the nature of men and circumstances, it is a usual thing to hear, not only regret but surprise expressed, when a man who has attained an elevated position in life, exhibits in that position those very defects of character through which he is there. The humbleness, subserviency and pliancy which were indispensable to his advancement, incapacitate him for command; and the integrity which he could at length afford to maintain — which might be even profitable to him — it is not in nature that he should resume. Therefore the man who forces a way to power is commonly more fit for it in some respects than the man who finds a way. But this quality of man being rare, the case seldom occurs, unless under circumstances of political commotion and subversion.

The arts of rising, properly so called, have commonly some mixture of baseness—more or less according as the aid from natural endowments is less or more.

In the earlier stages of a man's career he will find it his interest, if it be consonant with his character—(for nothing, be it observed, can be for a man's interest in the long run which is not founded upon his character),—I say if it fall in with his nature and dispositions, it will answer to his interests, to have a speaking acquaintance with large numbers of people of all classes and parties. A general acquaintance of this kind can be kept lightly in hand at no great cost of time or trouble. By taking care that it shall cover a due proportion of men of obscure and middle station, the discredit of courting the great may be partly escaped; and he who has a speaking acquaintance with a thousand individuals will hardly find himself in any circumstances in which he cannot make some use of somebody. Out of the multitude of the obscure some will emerge to distinction; the relations with this man or that may be drawn closer as circumstances suggest; and acquaintances which

could not be *made* at particular conjunctures without imputations of interested motives, may be *improved* at such moments with much less inconvenience. It is always to be borne in mind, that as in commerce large fortunes are most commonly made by dealing in articles for which the poor (that is the multitude) are customers, so in this traffic with society, a man should take into account not the rich and the great only, but the many.

When a man shall have mounted to a higher level of fortune, he will doubtless find the numerousness of his acquaintance in obscure life to be more troublesome than useful. But if he have taken proper care not to lavish himself in wanton intimacies, and whilst multiplying his *potential* friendships as much as possible, not to cultivate them into actual friendships oftener than his occasions required, he will find the burthen of his superfluous acquaintance lie hardly so heavy upon him in any circumstances

as to make it worth his while to throw it off. In his more exalted station bows and smiles will be abundantly sufficient for those with whom bows and smiles had at all times constituted the warp and woof of his connection. From those with whom his intercourse has gone further he may probably be enabled to earn a dispensation for the future, by doing them some substantial service which costs him nothing. And with regard to any still closer alliances in which he may be entangled with obscure and unserviceable men, he will do well to single out some individual from time to time, in whose behalf he should make some great and well-known exertion as a tribute to friendship. This will enable him to spare trouble in other instances, and yet avoid being charged generally with the pride of a *parvenu*.

To return to the earlier state of the aspirant. Whilst he has his way to make in the world he should not be afraid of incurring obligations

towards men in power ; still less should he be afraid of avowing those which he does incur. On the contrary, he should be more ready to imagine a benefit when there is none, than to disavow or to extenuate (as men will sometimes do through the mistakes of an unintelligent pride) any real service. He should indeed be prodigal of thanks to every body who can be implicated in a benefit conferred on him ; for thanks are as commonly the seed of a future benefit as the fruit of one foregoing. He should be careful of insisting much on *claims* ; for patrons become least alert to bestow those favours which are most expected, even though the expectation have some colour of a ground of justice to go upon ; they are apt to lose the sense of pleasure in doing that which is presented to them in the light of a duty ; and the notion of occasioning an agreeable surprise and creating unanticipated happiness, will oftentimes induce a patron to grant that which he would not yield to a well-

founded pretension. A suitor should therefore elect one ground or the other : if the claim of right and justice be not strong enough to compel recognition, he should rest wholly upon the hope of favour,—throwing into his suit only so much of the character of a just claim as may enable his patron to make head against other just claims that conflict with it.

One who would thrive by seeking favours from the great, should never trouble them for small ones. A minister can probably make a man's fortune with as little trouble as it gives him to write a note or to bear in mind some petty request. He will therefore be fretted by applications for which there is no strong motive to be urged ; or if he does what is asked with complacency, he will, however, measure the favour by *his* standard of trouble, and consider (with equal complacency) that he is as much quits with his client as if he had made his fortune. I have known men spring a numerous

pack of influential friends upon a minister, to obtain some trifle which might almost have been had by asking for, and then plume themselves upon the extreme tenuity of the service which they wanted to be done to them. A man who acts thus will be less easily excused than one who is extravagant in his demands. The minister naturally says, "If he wanted next to nothing, why have I had to read twenty letters of recommendation?"

Amongst the arts of rising it is needless to say that few are more important than that of holding fast by the skirts of a party. Tergiversation, indeed, is much more frequently justifiable in political morals, than advisable as a matter of personal prudence. To take an example from English history: — A. a Whig and a personal friend of an aristocratical Whig leader B., joined the government of a Tory prime minister C. In the circumstances of the time there was little or no real difference in political

sentiment between the Tories and the aristocratical Whigs, and A. acted as he did with the full approbation and even at the earnest entreaty of his friend B., who intimated to C. that he would consider A.'s admission to C.'s cabinet as tantamount to his own, and A. as his representative in the government. Nevertheless when the Tories lost office and B. with the Whigs succeeded them, A. shared precisely the same fate as would have attended any other renegade from his party. He was thrown out of public life, and could not act either with the Whigs or against them. He had forfeited the rights of hostility,—at all times half the fortune of a politician. The rule which I would deduce from this example is, that a statesman will do wisely for himself to walk by the broad lines of party distinction, and not imagine that the specialties of a case will exonerate him from the obligations of an adherent. It may be, that under particular circumstances, not only the

entreaties of his friends and partisans, but even the interests of his party, shall recommend to him to take office without them; but he will not be the less on that account cast out from amongst them. A public man's career is affected by what is broad, manifest and universally understood, and not by circumstantial justifications.

CHAPTER XV.

ON QUARRELLING.

THAT man would have been by disposition well adapted for statesmanship, of whom it was said that

“ The universal stock of the world’s injury

“ Would be too poor to find a quarrel for him.”*

For a statesman should be by nature and temper the most unquarrelsome of men, and when he finds it necessary to quarrel, should do it, though with a stout heart with a cool head. There is no such test of a man’s superiority of character as in the well-conducting of an unavoidable quarrel ; and to be engaged in no quarrels but those that are unavoidable,

* “ A fair Quarrel,” by Middleton and Rowley.

though it be not the *experimentum crucis* which the other test is, affords however an evidence of some excellent qualities.

Idle and frivolous duels are especially to be avoided, because they bring a man into contempt. In the public opinion of these days a presumption of vanity and folly lies against the challenger in a case of duel, and he is charged with the burthen of proving the contrary; nor will he be enabled to clear himself in the judgment of that portion of mankind whose respect is of importance to a statesman, unless his proceedings shall have been marked by the strength of moderation and the dignity of forbearance. He should be able to make it appear that he has yielded to an inevitable necessity, and that every step which he took was taken in a spirit of good sense.

Moreover, in cases which do not proceed to the extremity of fighting a duel, a man should be enabled to show something more than merely

that he has put his antagonist in the wrong, and that he has not on his own part committed any distinct and definable error. There is a sort of man who goes through the world in a succession of quarrels, always able to make out that he is in the right, although he never ceases to put other men in the wrong. The least that can be said of such a person is that he has an unhappy aptitude for eliciting whatever evil there may be in the natures with which he comes in contact; and a man who is sure to cause injuries to be done to him wherever he goes, is almost as great an evil and inconvenience as if he were himself the wrong-doer.

A statesman should have a disposition the reverse of all this, so that he may sun out all the good in men's natures, and not only not quarrel without just cause, but make it as unlikely as may be that just cause will be given him.

Nevertheless his lot is cast amongst a contentious people, and it is not to be denied that he will find it convenient from time to time to show himself capable of provocation. What he has to do is, to be good-tempered and complacent in the main, just and discreet in his choice of excepted cases. His attacks upon individuals should hardly ever be made but by way of reprisals ; they should be grounded in policy, and they should be indebted for spirit and effect to the anger of the imagination rather than to that of the heart. The “torva voluptas” of an indignation conjured up in the fancy, will answer every useful purpose of invective, be more governable than the impulses of an irascible temper, and less likely to abuse an occasional and fitting indulgence into an emancipation from general control.

A statesman should be careful not only never to make a wanton or unprovoked attack, but also never to make an attack which is not

almost certain to be effective. Indifference has its advantages, and heavy blows have theirs; and a judicious statesman will take care to secure either the one sort of advantage or the other. But whichever course he takes he should be placable, and beware of entertaining resentment after its practical uses are at an end. In many cases, indeed, victory will be turned to the best account by one who values it chiefly as placing him in a position to make, or readily receive, overtures of peace and reconciliation. “E' necessario,” says Machiavel, “ò non offendere mai alcuno, ò fare l' offese “ad un tratto, et dipoi rassicurare gli huomini, “e dare loro cagioni di quietare e fermare “l' animo.”* In the therapeutics of statesmanship the enmity of an assailant should be looked upon as a peccant humour, which is to be cured, first by a blister and then by a salve.

* Discorsi sopra Tito Livio.

With regard to hostility evinced towards a statesman behind his back, and which comes privately to his knowledge, his best course will be to leave it unnoticed, and not to allow his knowledge of it to transpire. To punish men for such acts of enmity as these, will hardly save you from others of the like kind, because the acts are done in reliance upon the mischief not breaking out. By divulging your knowledge of the offence done to you, you make an established mutual hostility out of that which may probably have been nothing more than a random stroke of volatile ill-will. I derive this observation from Lord Bacon, who adds, “*Si comparari posset speculum aliquod magicum in quo odia, et quæcunque contra nos ullibi commoventur, intueri possemus, melius nobis foret si protinus projiceretur.*” But there is a case to be excepted; for it may happen that it would be convenient to us, on other grounds, to be able to deal with the party offending as

an enemy; and then we may proclaim his private offence as a justification.

Hardly any case can happen in which it will be advisable for a person placed in a high station to quarrel on the account of his *dignity*; and least of all should he quarrel on this score with an inferior. A dignity which has to be contended for is not worth a quarrel; for it is of the essence of real dignity to be self-sustained, and no man's dignity can be asserted without being impaired.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE ETHICS OF POLITICS.

THE rules of political morality seem to be less ascertained and agreed upon in general opinion than any other branch of philosophy which applies itself directly to the life of man; and this is owing perhaps to their being in their nature less determinate; for though the *first* principles of this, as of all other morality, are plain and definite, the derivative principles, and their application in practice, are not so.

Some moralists would have the principles of private life carried whole into politics, in all their distinctness and strictness. Some, on the other hand, might have been worshippers in

the Temple at Acro-Corinth, which was dedicated to Necessity and Violence.

The result of this division of opinion is, that public men who adopt the more rigid creed, finding the carrying of it into practice to be equivalent to a repudiation of public life, are set at variance with themselves—their conduct jarring with their principles—and get their consciences broken down in an unavailing struggle: whilst they who deny the applicability to political life of the principles of private morality, are often unable to find footing upon any principle whatever.

The violation in political transactions of any precept of private morals, is denounced by popular moralists as “a doing of evil that good may come of it.” It is far indeed from my thoughts to dissent from the maxim that evil is not to be done in order that good may come of it. But for the purpose of ascertaining the bearing of the maxim upon civil affairs, it is

necessary to examine what may be the exact meaning intended by it. I am not, I trust, infected with the juvenile philosophy which would reject popular maxims of this kind, without examining whether their error be not the want of scholastic accuracy in the terms, more than the want of reason for their basis. And the maxim in question stands upon still higher grounds; for it appears to have been popular even before the Christian era, and the sanction of St. Paul was given incidentally to the substance of it. I inquire, therefore, what that substance is? To the terms a logician would probably at first sight take this exception: that whereas nothing can be good or evil but as good or evil may come of it (the consequence of every act determining its quality), so you cannot do evil that good may come of it, unless by a mistake of what will be the consequence of what you do. But it is evident that something more is implied by the

maxim, than a mere warning against mistaking evil for good. The exception, therefore, would be just against the terms ; but when the sense is duly expressed it is found to contain a well-known principle of ethics. The acts which we do are truly good or evil, not only according to the immediate and obvious consequences, but also according to those which are remote and involved. Morality can only be maintained by the submission of individual judgments to general rules. The evil consequences *involved* in a departure from any such rule in any case, will always overbalance the *ostensible* good consequences ; so that on the whole it is truly an act of evil consequence, or a doing of evil. The maxim means then, “ Do not for
“ the sake of certain good consequences, though
“ they be perhaps the only ones directly per-
“ ceivable, an act which, as being a departure
“ from a general rule of morality, must be evil
“ upon the balance of consequences.”

Let us take this principle thus understood, and see whether it be equally applicable to private and to political life.

The law of truth stands first in the code of private morality. Suppose this law adopted absolutely, by statesmen acting in this country and in this age as members of a government. Not one in ten of the measures taken by the cabinet, can win the sincere assent of every member of that cabinet. The opinions of fifteen or twenty individuals can never be uniformly concurrent. The law of truth would require the dissentient members not to express assent. Under this law, when the Speaker of the House of Commons bids those who are of this opinion to say "Aye" and those who are of the contrary opinion to say "No," the dissentient members of the cabinet must say "No" accordingly. But if every such diversity of opinion is to be publicly declared, it is manifestly not in the nature of things, as society

is at present constituted, that a plural government should exist. To this the moralist answers, — Ask not whether it can exist or no, but maintain truth and the immutable principles of right and wrong, and trusting to them dare all consequences. I reply, If they *be* immutable principles of right and wrong, trust to them of course; but that is itself the question at issue.

I recur, therefore, to the primary test of right and wrong, namely, the balance of all the consequences, near and distant, obvious and involved; and I estimate the consequences of relaxing the law of truth in private life to show a vast balance of evil; and the consequence of relaxing that law in public life to show a serious array of evil certainly, but I hesitate to say a balance, because I feel myself unable to calculate the magnitude of the moral evils, and the extent of the destruction of moral principles, which would ensue either by a dis-

solution of the general frame of society, or by the secession of scrupulous men from the government, and the consequent delivery of it into the hands of the unscrupulous. If indeed the cause of truth at large were to be sacrificed by taking a distinction between the obligations of truth in private and in political affairs, then I should have no hesitation whatever: because the cause of truth at large and of civil society are one and indivisible: but it appears to me, on the contrary, that the cause of truth at large is sacrificed, not by taking the distinction, but by confounding the distinction. For when a member of a government, advocating a particular measure which he does not sincerely approve, is believed by himself, or by others, to be committing the same violation of the principle of truth as if he were telling a falsehood in private life, then indeed he himself incurs the guilt of such a falsehood and the corruption of conscience attending it, and the cause of

truth suffers by his example and his impunity. But if, on the other hand, he advocates what he does not approve with a clear conscience, and stands, *quâ* statesman, in his own apprehension and in that of others, under a well-understood absolution from speaking the truth in particular cases, then there is in reality no more violation of the principle of truth at large than there is of his own conscience. For falsehood ceases to be falsehood when it is understood on all hands that the truth is not expected to be spoken. The criminal at the bar who pleads "Not guilty" to his indictment, is not charged with lying though his plea be never so untrue. Forensic advocacy is conducted upon a similar understanding: and it may demand a doubt whether they who extend the jurisdiction of a principle to cases which must in the nature of things refuse its jurisdiction, do not in reality act in derogation and not in support of its authority; seeing that the authority of all law

(whether of the moral or civil code) is weakened, when that is promulgated as law which must of necessity be generally disobeyed.

In fact if assent declared to particular measures which he does not approve, be a falsehood on the part of a member of a government introducing those measures, then no government has ever been formed, any one member of which has been other than a liar. It is certain, then, that great discredit is done to the cause of truth, either, on the one hand, by the uniform or general invasion of it by men all of whom have an eminent position in life, and some a high moral reputation; or, on the other hand, by calling that a principle of truth which they uniformly or generally invade.

The real difficulty lies (as I conceive) in discriminating the cases of exemption; in the delimitation of those bounds within which a statesman's dispensation should be confined. To treat of these would require a volume. A

statesman is engaged, certainly, in a field of action which is one of great danger to truthfulness and sincerity. His conscience walks, too like the ghost of a conscience, in darkness or twilight. But his moral nature will not be the better if he be taught to think that the form of falsehood is the same with the spirit, and that when he shall have done what, being a statesman in office he cannot but do, he has no longer any moral truthfulness to sustain or to lose.

Again, the moral principle of private life which forbids one man to despoil another of his property, is outraged in the last degree when one man holds another in slavery. Carry it therefore in all its absoluteness into political life, and you require a statesman to do what he can, under any circumstances whatever, to procure immediate freedom for any parties who may be holden in slavery in the dominion of the state which he serves. Yet take the case

of negro slaves in the British dominions in the condition of barbarism in which they were thirty years ago, and we find the purest of men and strictest of moralists falling short of the conclusion. In private life the magnitude of the good which results from maintaining the principle inviolate, far overbalances any specific evil which may possibly attend an adherence to it in a particular case. But in political affairs it may happen that the specific evil is the greater of the two, even in looking to the longest train of consequences that can be said to be within the horizon of human foresight. For to set a generation of savages free in a civilised community, would be merely to maintain one moral principle inviolate at the expense of divers other moral principles.

Upon the whole, therefore, I come to the conclusion that the cause of public morality will be best served by moralists permitting to statesmen, what statesmen must necessarily take

and exercise — a free judgment namely, though a most responsible one, in the weighing of specific against general evil, and in the perception of perfect or imperfect analogies between public and private transactions, in respect of the moral rules by which they are to be governed. The standard of morality to be held forth by moralists to statesmen is sufficiently elevated when it is raised to the level of practicable virtue : such standards to be influential must be above common opinion certainly, but not remotely above it ; for if above it, yet near, they draw up common opinion ; but if they be far off in their altitude they have no attractive influence.

By some readers it may perhaps be questioned whether, in a work the scheme of which admits no amplitude of discussion, I ought to have treated at all, since I must of necessity treat shortly, so high and grave a subject as that of political morality. I have done so, supported

by the assurance that there is amongst the writers and thinkers of this country such an effective oppugnancy to all false doctrine on moral themes, that even should I have fallen into error, the putting forth of such error will tend to bring truth into a more vital activity. Yet this assurance notwithstanding, I may almost say that I have written this chapter with a trembling hand.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON CONSISTENCY IN A STATESMAN.

THE credit which is commonly attached to consistency in a statesman, belongs to it, not so much for being a merit in itself (which it may or may not be) as for being a presumptive evidence of another merit — the merit of political probity. Considering the temptations under which politicians are placed, of changing their opinions, or rather their professions of opinion, from motives of self interest, the world will not give them credit for motives of honest conviction, unless when the change shall be to their manifest loss and disadvantage. And if the judgments of the world were to go otherwise, no

doubt these temptations would be yielded to much more frequently than they are. Therefore when a statesman sees fit to change an opinion which he has publicly professed, whether the change be right or wrong, it is required for the general guarding and sustaining of political honesty, that he should suffer for it, either in political character, or (what would generally be the more eligible alternative for him in the long run) in immediate and apparent personal interests.

In this country and in these times, the questions of political consistency which arise are exceedingly complicated and perplexing, and the snares with which a statesman's integrity is beset are many in proportion, and very inveigling. For popular assent having become an essential condition of the practicability of measures, an assumption of that assent being attainable to any measure becomes part and lot of the opinion about it; in as much as the opinion, if

it had not reference to practicability, would be a mere Utopian speculation. If popular assent, then, be unexpectedly refused, it would seem no impeachment of a statesman's integrity or even consistency, that he should change his course; since it is not the previous opinion that is changed, but one of the essential elements of the case upon which the previous opinion had been formed. But it will be asked, perhaps, whether a statesman should suffer himself to be so far the agent of public opinion as whilst in office he must be, when the assents and dissents of public opinion do not square with his judgment. The answer is, I apprehend, that those assents and dissents are a part of the subject-matter with which his judgment is to deal, and that supposing them to be unalterable by any course which he might pursue, all that he has to do is to conform his judgment to the case inclusive of them, and to make the nearest approximation which they will permit, to the course

which apart from them he would think it expedient to pursue. He should steer by the compass, but he must lie with the wind.

If however he can throw upon the opinions which he disapproves any effective discredit or discountenance by quitting office, it may become his duty to do so. And the like duty may devolve upon him if, owing to the mis-judgments of mankind, his political reputation and the public interests involved in it are likely to be sacrificed by his continuing in office.

Men brought early into public life will sometimes propound opinions in a way to furnish the magazines of their enemies with heavy charges of inconsistency in future. A young man will sometimes adopt opinions for the purpose of making speeches and playing a part; and when he plays his part only with the intellectual ardour of a disputant, though he commits himself a good deal, he may perhaps

find an escape from the difficulties of a change of opinion at a future time ; but when he goes further and declaims with a moral earnestness and solemnity as one who is in it head and heart, then he cannot change his side of the question, unmoved by any change in the aspect of the question itself, without incurring the reproach of corrupt motives or of a volatile understanding. In a considerable proportion of tergiversations if not in the majority of them, the insincerity, if the truth were known, would be found to have been as much in the previous opinion as in that which supplants it. It is a rare thing perhaps at any age, certainly in youth and with a cultivated and argumentative mind, to have strong and conclusive opinions, though it is a common thing to express opinions strongly ; and young and oratorical men will often enounce as intimate convictions, and with great zeal and fervour, opinions which are in reality as lightly holden by them as they have been prematurely

formed. In after life this insincerity is visited upon them; for they are accused of a less venial hypocrisy when the light opinion is seriously and sincerely changed.

Some statesmen will express themselves strongly, upon loose consideration, against a course of conduct which they do not think it for their interest to adopt at the moment; but afterwards perhaps they find it eligible, whereupon, looking at the matter more closely, they find it justifiable; and then in adopting it they stand self-condemned without reason. Thus a man will sometimes say, when he does not much expect office to be offered to him, that he should think himself the greatest vagabond in the universe if he were to accept it, saying so without any adequate grounds for the opinion. And when the offer comes, he accepts it perhaps without any real impropriety, but with discredit redounding to him from his previous imprudencies of speech. There are cases enough of this kind

occurring from time to time, to suggest to a discreet statesman the precept of not indulging in hypothetical denunciations of particular lines of conduct, unless when there is some practical purpose to be answered by it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON SECRECY.

WHOM a statesman trusts at all he should trust largely, not to say unboundedly; and he should avow his trust to the world. In nine cases out of ten of betrayed confidence in affairs of state, vanity is the traitor. When a man comes into possession of some chance secrets now and then — some one or two — he is tempted to parade them to this friend or that. But when he is known to be trusted with all manner of secrets, his vanity is interested, not to show them, but to show that he can keep them. And his fidelity of heart is also better secured.

A secret may be sometimes best kept by

keeping the secret of its being a secret. It is not many years since a state secret of the greatest importance was printed without being divulged, merely by sending it to the press like any other matter, and trusting to the mechanical habits of the persons employed for their printing the document without knowing what subject it related to.

The only secrecy which is worthy of trust in matters of state — and indeed the same may be said of secrecy in private friendship — is that which not merely observes an *enjoined* silence, but which maintains a considerate and judicious reticence in matters in which silence is perceived to be expedient, though it have *not* been enjoined. Faithfulness to public interests and to official and to friendly confidence, demands a careful exercise of the judgment as to what shall be spoken and what not, on many occasions when there is no question of obedience to express injunctions of secrecy. And indeed, in

dealing with a confidential officer or friend, a statesman would do well to avoid any frequency of injunction on this head on particular occasions, because it tends to impair, on the part of such officer or friend, that general watchfulness which is produced in a man who feels that he is thrown upon his own judgment and caution.

Secrecy will hardly be perfectly preserved unless by one who makes it a rule to avoid the whole of a subject of which he has to retain a part. To flesh your friend's curiosity, and then endeavour to leave him with a *hâc usque*, is exposing your faculty of reticence to an unnecessary trial.

The most difficult of all subjects to be kept secret are such as will furnish fair occasion for a jest; and a statesman should regulate his confidence accordingly; being especially sparing of it in regard to such matters, and where he must needs impart them, taking care not to

imp their wings by any jest of his own imparted along with them.

Shy and unready men are great betrayers of secrets ; for there are few wants more urgent for the moment than the want of something to say.

notwithstanding, most men will make their election of those objects. Do they not then desire to be happy? An answer which should negative this desire would seem to be almost a contradiction in terms; and the true answer is, that in such cases the thing desired and elected is for the *immediate* happiness of the party, and is contrary only to his happiness in the long-run. A young man of a weak body and a nervous temperament shall be eager to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, although he be deliberately convinced in his judgment that parliamentary labours and a life of political vicissitude will destroy his health and with it his happiness. For the seat in parliament is an advancement in life, and that is always pleasant when it takes place, although the enjoyment soon passes off, and nothing but a constant succession of advancements could keep it up. It is thus that for the pleasure of the *transition* (which is a real pleasure so long as it lasts) we sacrifice the *state*.

The world will commonly end by making men that which it thinks them. If a man could be satisfied that the world was convinced that he was indifferent to the objects of ambition, then he might more easily be actually indifferent to them ; but as the world must always be understood to assume that a man is aiming at such objects, the non-attainment of them seems to place him in a position of defeat. This is more distinctly the case when a man has made a first step towards the acquisition ; and the circumstance that with every succeeding step a man more and more convicts himself of ambitious aims in the eyes of the world, thereby staking more of manifest discomfiture upon the issues, may have some share in explaining the growing nature of the passion.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCERNING RANK AS A QUALIFICATION FOR
HIGH OFFICE.

It may be thought that the function would carry the rank. If this were so, still social and extrinsic rank would be desirable, as coming in aid of official. But it is not so always. For it often happens that the functions of statesmanship are performed by one who has neither social nor much of official rank. The evil of this is that parties who transact business with him do not feel the value of his time, and a considerable part of the public property invested in his labour is lost.

Such a person, through the want of better titles, will commonly obtain that of a "Jack in office;" and *his* insolence and presumption

will be contrasted with the natural courtesy of a man of high rank and station. The truth is, however, that the one, being scrupulously approached and charily occupied, can afford to be courteous; whereas, if the other were to be equally so, it must be at the cost, not only of his personal convenience, but of his duty and essential utility as a public servant. No suitors tread timorously in *his* approaches; none sit upon thorns in his presence, pricked by the consciousness that they are stealing the golden minutes. He is understood to be active and influential in the transaction of business, and every stranger, therefore, who has any thing to solicit, knocks hardily at his door, not reflecting that his influence and activity depend upon his shutting himself up and applying himself uninterruptedly to his business. His remedy is to be cold, dry or harsh, — not for his personal relief, but in order that he may be allowed to do his duty to the public. His reward is to be

called a “Jack in office;” and the common remark is repeated, “How unassuming are the “highborn, the highbred, the men of rank, the “men of station — how insolent are the under-“strappers !”

Further, adventitious rank goes well with office, in respect that it tends to smooth over an inherent disparity the wrong way, when it occurs (as it must and will occasionally) between those in command and those under command. To see reason over-ruled,

“And strength by limping sway disabled,

“And art made tongue-tied by authority —” *

will doubtless be disagreeable, let it be warranted as it may; but it will be less odious when done by a prince or a duke, than when it is the act of a man raised from a lower rank in society to a high official station. Were it possible that preferment should always go by

* Shakspeare's Sonnets, 66.

merit, other elevation might be better dispensed with ; but looking at life and human nature as they exist, and to the influence which established orders and degrees of society obtain over the imaginations of men, it may be said that that influence is well applied when it helps to render less obnoxious an inevitable official subjection of the superior intellect. That is no insignificant part of the philosophy of government which calls in aid the imaginations of men in order to subjugate the will and understanding ; and so long as man shall continue to be an imaginative being, it will be expedient that those who are to enjoy pre-eminence or to exercise power, should be invested with some ideal influence which may serve to clothe the nakedness of authority. Nor is it to be supposed that an injustice is done to intellect so often as it is postponed to other attributes : on the contrary that justice which deals in equal dispensations would bid the man of great

intellectual gifts to be content with the superiority he has from nature, and leave other superiorities to those who are worse provided; and it is justice to the public, and not to him, which demands his preferment.

Moreover, if intellect were not to divide with other advantages the deference of mankind, it may be doubted whether the domination of the strong in understanding over the weak would not become oppressive; for we see every day that talents are easily divorced from wisdom and charity; and when this separation takes place, there is no pride which is more tyrannical, more insolent, more wantonly aggressive, than the pride of intellect.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON DECISIVENESS.

THERE are divers kinds of decisiveness ; there is that of temperament, and that of reason, and there is that which is compounded of both ; and this last is the best for a statesman. The tendency of the reasoning and contemplative faculty is to suggest more doubts than conclusions, and to comprehend in its dealings with a subject more considerations than the human mind is adequate to bring to a clear issue. Temperament is wanted, therefore, to abbreviate the operations of reason and close up the distances, thereby enabling the mind, where many things are doubtful, to seize de-

cisively those which are least so, and hold by them as conclusions. On the other hand, the tendency of a temperament energetically decisive, is to overleap some of the preliminary and collateral investigations which might, with proper patience, be available to certainty of conclusion; and the strength of a reasoning faculty trained to scrupulous habits is required to balance this tendency.

Moreover, to make a perfect statesman it is necessary that these antagonist dispositions should be so far under command that they may be curbed or indulged in different degrees at different stages in the consideration of a question. If the subject be large and complex, the state natural to a comprehensive mind at the first approach to it, is a state of some confusion and perplexity, and this is the best state to begin with; for he whose mind is not seasonably inconclusive, and cannot bear with a reasonable term of sus-

pense, will either get wrong, or get right more tardily by means of after-thought and correction. To hold the judgment free upon specific points in a question, until the mind have taken a general estimate of the proportions and relations of its several parts, and have become somewhat familiarised to the hypothetical aspects of it, is the indecisiveness of reason and wisdom. This is the *couchant* attitude of the mind, which best prepares it to secure its prey; or (to transfer the metaphor) it is the wheeling survey which precedes the stoop. But when the time comes to stoop or to pounce, the energy ought to be in proportion to the previous abstinence. Thus the stages in the consideration and decision of a question, as in the adopting and pursuing a course of action, ought to be marked by more of patience and circumspection at the beginning, more of energy towards the end. “*Prima Argo committenda sunt; extrema Briareo.*” Some

statesmen have been known to reverse this maxim.

Indecisiveness will be *cæteris paribus* most pernicious in affairs which require secrecy ; — 1st. Because the greatest aid to secrecy is celerity ; 2d. Because the undecided man, seeking after various counsel, necessarily multiplies confidences.

The pretext for indecisiveness is commonly mature deliberation ; but in reality indecisive men occupy themselves less in deliberation than others ; for to him who fears to decide, deliberation (which has a foretaste of that fear) soon becomes intolerably irksome, and the mind escapes from the anxiety of it into alien themes. Or if that seems too open a dereliction of its task, it gives itself to inventing reasons of postponement ; and the man who has confirmed habits of indecisiveness will come in time to look upon postponement as the first object in all cases, and wherever it seems to be prac-

licable, will bend all his faculties to accomplish it. With the same eagerness with which others seize opportunities of action, will these men seize upon pretexts for foregoing them; not having before their eyes the censure pronounced by the philosopher of Malmesbury, who says, — “ After men have been in deliberation till the time of action approach, if it be not then manifest what is best to be done, ’t is a sign the difference of motives the one way and the other is not great: therefore not to resolve then, is to lose the occasion by weighing of trifles; which is pusillanimity.”*

* Leviathan, part i. chap. ii.

CHAPTER XXII.

REFORM OF THE EXECUTIVE.

CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTION OF AN OFFICE
OR ESTABLISHMENT FOR TRANSACTING THE
BUSINESS OF A MINISTER.

IN this country an establishment of this kind is commonly formed as follows :— 1st. There are one or more political and parliamentary officers subordinate to the minister, who come and go with their principals or with the government to which they belong, but have not seats in the cabinet. They go by the name of Under Secretaries of State in the three Secretaries of State's offices, Vice-President of the

Board of Trade, Secretaries and junior Lords or junior Commissioners at the Board of Treasury, the Board of Admiralty, and the Board of Control. 2d. There is an officer of similar rank, who is not in parliament and holds his office by a more permanent tenure, without reference to changes of ministry. 3d. There is the minister's private secretary, who of course comes and goes with his principal, whether the change extends to the government or not. 4th. There are some twenty clerks more or less, also permanent, divided into three or four grades of subordination.

As any essential reform of the executive government must consist in a reform of these establishments, I will endeavour to explain what seems to be the theory of them, what are their merits in practice, and what are the means of amending them.

The system seems to assume that a minister who is charged with a particular branch of

business besides his share in the general direction of affairs in the cabinet, will require for that branch of business, one person or more to assist him in transactions of a political and parliamentary character, and another to aid him with that knowledge and experience connected with his particular charge which can only be obtained by continuous service in one department of the state; and that he will also require a private secretary to write his complimentary notes and take care of his confidential papers, and a score of clerks to transact matters of routine and make copies and entries of despatches. — The theory is correct in assuming that these several things are necessary to be done; but it is exceedingly fallacious in its estimate of relative quantities, and in its omissions.

A statesman who takes a part in consultations in the cabinet, or debates in a legislative assembly, or in both, ought to be relieved from

all business which is not accessory to the performance of his duties as councillor and legislator. For those duties, if amply and energetically performed, must, by their nature if not by their magnitude, incapacitate any but very extraordinary individuals for performing others. The excitement of oral discussion with able colleagues upon deeply interesting and often personal topics, and still more the excitement of public debate, can rarely be combined with patient application to dry documentary business within the walls of an office. If the one class of business be transacted, in the duties of research and preparation with fidelity, and in those of execution with ardour, the other class will be almost inevitably neglected. It is true that no accurate demarcation can be made between parliamentary and cabinet business on the one hand, and office business on the other ; and a good deal of acquaintance with the latter will be necessary to give the general

knowledge required for the former. It is also true, that in order to answer the claims of our constitution, the statesman who is dependent for his place upon a majority in the House of Commons, must be responsible for everything ; and in order to bear this responsibility he must be conversant with all the more important business transacted under his authority. This conversancy I would be understood, therefore, to include in the business accessory to the discharge of a minister's duties in the cabinet and in parliament ; the exemption which I require for him being of that actual execution of his office business which is not indispensable to a competent degree of conversancy with it.

The minister being thus relieved during the whole year, and his parliamentary assistant during the session of parliament, it remains to inquire how the office business (setting aside the mere routine and mechanical part) is to be done without their help. The theory says, by

one permanent and experienced officer. Whether we admit that the theory speaks the truth, depends upon the view which we take of what the duties are, and of the manner in which they ought to be executed.

Descriptive and authenticated estimates of such duties are manifestly impossible to be given : but let some considerations be deemed worthy to be well weighed.

The far greater proportion of the duties which are performed in the office of a minister are and must be performed under no effective responsibility. Where politics and parties are not affected by the matter in question, and so long as there is no flagrant neglect or glaring injustice to individuals which a party can take hold of, the responsibility to parliament is merely nominal, or falls otherwise only through casualty, caprice, and a misemployment of the time due from parliament to legislative affairs. Thus the business of the office may be reduced

within a very manageable compass without creating public scandal. By evading decisions wherever they can be evaded ; by shifting them on other departments or authorities where by any possibility they can be shifted ; by giving decisions upon superficial examinations,—categorically, so as not to expose the superficiality in propounding the reasons ; by deferring questions till, as Lord Bacon says, “ they resolve “ of themselves ;” by undertaking nothing for the public good which the public voice does not call for ; by conciliating loud and energetic individuals at the expense of such public interests as are dumb or do not attract attention ; by sacrificing every where what is feeble and obscure to what is influential and cognisable : by such means and shifts as these the single unctuary granted by the theory may reduce his business within his powers, and perhaps obtain for himself the most valuable of all reputations in this line of life, that of “ a safe

“man;” and if his business, even thus reduced, strains, as it well may, his powers and his industry to the utmost, then (whatever may be said of the theory) the man may be without reproach—without other reproach at least than that which belongs to men placing themselves in a way to have their understandings abused and debased, their sense of justice corrupted, their public spirit and appreciation of public objects undermined.

Turning (I would almost say revolting) from this to another view of what these duties are and of the manner in which they ought to be performed, I would in the first place earnestly insist upon this: that in all cases concerning points of conduct and quarrels of subordinate officers, in all cases of individual claims upon the public and public claims upon individuals, in short in all cases (and such commonly constitute the bulk of a minister’s unpolitical business) wherein the minister is called upon to

is hazard and difficulty, the inclination on the part of the superior authority should be that of the stronger nature, rather to assume than to devolve. For it is in this harmony between official power and natural strength that the state is justified.

Further, it is one business to do what must be done, another to devise what ought to be done. It is in the spirit of the British government, as hitherto existing, to transact only the former business; and the reform which it requires is to enlarge that spirit so as to include the latter. Of and from amongst those measures which are forced upon him, to choose that which will bring him the most credit with the least trouble, has hitherto been the sole care of a statesman in office; and as a statesman's official establishment has been heretofore constituted, it is care enough for any man. Every day, every hour, has its exigencies, its immediate demands; and he who has hardly time to

eat his meals, cannot be expected to occupy himself in devising good for mankind. "I am," says Mr. Landor's statesman, "a waiter at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish." The current compulsory business he gets through as he may; some is undone, some is ill done; but at least to get it done is an object which he proposes to himself. But as to the inventive and suggestive portions of a statesman's functions, he would think himself an Utopian dreamer if he undertook them: and such he would be if he undertook them in any other way than through a re-constitution and reform of his establishment.

And what then is the field for these inventive and self-suggested operations; and if practicable, would they be less important than those which are called for by the obstreperous voices of to-day and to-morrow?

I am aware that under popular institutions

there are many measures of exceeding advantage to the people, which it would be in vain for a minister to project until the people, or an influential portion of the people, should become apprised of the advantage and ask for it; many which can only be carried by overcoming resistance; much resistance only to be overcome with the support of popular opinion and general solicitude for the object. And looking no further, it might seem that what is not immediately called for by the public voice was not within the sphere of practical dealing. But I am also aware, that in the incalculable extent and multifarious nature of the public interests which lie open to the operations of a statesman in this country, one whose faculties should be adequate would find (in every month that he should devote to the search) measures of great value and magnitude which time and thought only were wanting to render practicable. He would find them—not certainly by shutting

himself up in his closet and inventing what had not been thought of before—but by holding himself on the alert; by listening with all his ears (and he should have many ears abroad in the world) for the suggestions of circumstance; by catching the first moment of public complaint against real evil, encouraging it and turning it to account; by devising how to throw valuable measures that do not excite popular interest into one boat with those that do; by knowing (as a statesman who is competent to operations on a large scale may know) how to carry a measure by enlargement such as shall merge specific objections that would be insurmountable in general ones that can be met; in short by a thousand means and projects lying in the region between absolute spontaneous invention on the one hand and mere slavish adoption on the other; such means and projects as will suggest themselves to one who meditates the good of mankind “sagacious of his quarry

“ from afar,” but not to a minister whose whole soul is and must be in the “ notices of motions” and the order-book of the House of Commons, and who has no one behind to prompt him to other enterprise, no closet or office-statesman for him to fall back upon as upon an inner mind.

This then is the great evil and want — that there is not within the pale of our government any adequately numerous body of efficient statesmen, some to be more externally active and answer the demands of the day, others to be somewhat more retired and meditative in order that they may take thought for the morrow. How great the evil of this want is, it may require peculiar opportunities of observation fully to understand and feel: but one who with competent knowledge should consider well the number and magnitude of those measures which are postponed for years or totally pretermitted, not for want of practicability but for want of

time and thought; one who should proceed with such knowledge to consider the great means and appliances of wisdom which lie scattered through this intellectual country,—squandered upon individual purposes, not for want of applicability to national ones, but for want of being brought together and directed; one who surveying these things with a heart capable of a people's joys and sorrows, their happy virtue or miserable guilt on these things dependent, should duly estimate the abundant means unemployed, the exalted ends unaccomplished, could not choose, I think, but say within himself, that there must be something fatally amiss in the very idea of statesmanship on which our system of administration is based; or that there must be some mortal apathy at what should be the very centre and seat of life in a country — that the golden bowl must be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern.

How this state of things is to be amended it may be hard to teach, at least to minds which are fluttering in the perpetual agitation of current politics, or to those which have stiffened in established customs. But to a free and balanced understanding I would freely say, that whatever other things be necessary (and they are many) it is in the first place indispensable to a reform of the executive government of this country, that every minister of state charged with a particular department of public business should be provided with four or six permanent under-secretaries instead of one, — that all of those four or six should be efficient closet-statesmen, and two of them at the least be endowed, in addition to their practical abilities, with some gifts of philosophy and speculation well cultivated, disciplined, and prepared for use.

Yet such is the prevalent insensibility to that which constitutes the real treasure and re-

sources of the country — its serviceable and statesmanlike minds — and so far are men in power from searching the country through for such minds, or men in parliament from promoting or permitting the search, that I hardly know if that minister has existed in the present generation, who, if such a mind were casually presented to him, would not forego the use of it rather than hazard a debate in the House of Commons upon an additional item in his estimates.

Till the government of the country shall become a nucleus at which the best wisdom in the country contained shall be perpetually forming itself in deposit, it will be, except as regards the shuffling of power from hand to hand and class to class, little better than a government of fetches, shifts, and hand-to-mouth expedients. Till a wise and constant instrumentality at work upon administrative measures (distinguished as they might be from

measures of political parties) shall be understood to be essential to the government of a country, that country can be considered to enjoy nothing more than the embryo of a government, — a means towards producing, through changes in its own structure and constitution and in the political elements acting upon it, something worthy to be called a government at some future time. For governing a country is a very different thing from upholding a government. “*Alia res sceptrum, alia plectrum.*”

CHAPTER XXIII.

FURTHER RESPECTING REFORM OF THE EXECUTIVE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINISTER OF STATE. — PRIVATE SECRETARIES. — CLERKS.

It seems to be almost universally allowed, that in the choice of his private secretary a statesman may be guided mainly by considerations of personal intimacy, family connection, and the predilections of his wife and daughters. Yet is this an indulgence which a statesman who should thoughtfully consider his own interest would pause ere he permitted himself to accept ; an indulgence which a statesman who should consider the interests of his country, and appreciate in his heart the high duties to which he was called, would reject at once, as violating the

spirit of his vocation. That spirit which, binding up his country's welfare with his own, might inspire in the most selfish of human beings a generous impulse, in the most generous a pardonable if not commendable feeling of self-interest, — that spirit, I say, imperiously requires that he should surround himself on all sides with able and judicious men, whereby at every turn he may find himself met by prudent counsel and efficient aid. A word of warning in his ear at the moment of decision, a stroke of work done for him in a season of pressure, may affect the public service, the weal of individuals, the cause of justice, his own character and credit, in a way which could not but come home to his conscience, if he should sufficiently enlarge his understanding to perceive the consequences of his acts, to trace them truly, and to paint them in their just colours upon the moral sense.

A minister's private secretary has the care and management, under his principal's direction, of all affairs relating to the disposal of offices and employments. It has been said already that a statesman's most pregnant function lies here. Discretion, knowledge of mankind, public spirit, a spirit of justice, ears shut against private solicitation, ought to be regarded as essential qualifications, but not as the sole requisites for the office of private secretary; for along with these there should be as much of general ability as can be commanded. And it should never be forgotten that one of the most important benefits which a statesman can render to his country, is to make one service the cradle of another, and to place in such situations as these, and generally in all offices belonging to the establishment where his own business is transacted under his own eye, young men of promise, who may be bred up in them to the business of statesmanship, and thereby feed the

state with a succession of experienced men competent to its highest employments.

Bearing this in mind, let us proceed to examine his establishment of clerks. The points to be treated of in respect to them are — 1st. Their functions, — 2d. Their selection and nomination, — 3d. Their remuneration, — 4th. Their promotion.

I. As to their functions, they are of two kinds, intellectual and mechanical; and it were reasonable, therefore, that they should be divided into two classes, those who are fit for the one sort of employment, and those who are competent to the other only. I have heard it said indeed not unfrequently, that a young man should be employed in copying for some time at first, in order that he may learn his business; but if that business is to be intellectual I cannot think that this is the way really to teach it. If a man should apply himself diligently to mechanical labour, that will never lead him

into the path of intellectual exertion. If he revolt from mechanical labour (as may be expected of a highly educated man of good abilities) and yet find that that is the only task assigned to him, he will lapse into idleness. I conceive, therefore, that the man who is ever to be employed in the transaction of a statesman's business, should be chosen for his aptitude to that employment, and should be put to it at once, in a somewhat inferior grade at first, but so as to exempt him from any considerable amount of purely mechanical labour.

With respect to the manner in which this labour should be procured to be done, there may be a small separate class of salaried clerks for the despatch of such part of it as requires secrecy, whose views and prospects should be confined to their own sphere. But it will be found that the great bulk of the copying business of the office will be always executed most efficiently and cheaply by the piece or job, —

paying persons in the rank of life of law-stationers and their hired writers at the rate of so much per folio, instead of employing salaried clerks ;—the hired writers to be, however, for better assurance of respectability and good conduct, permanently attached to the establishment. In the despatch of business, so far as copying is concerned, there is as much difference between this system and the other, as between a sick stomach and a hungry one. Upon the system of salaries, every person who is employed as a copyist is desirous to do as little as he can ; upon the other there is a daily appetite and eagerness for work : upon the one system, when copying is wanted, it is not easy, whatever be the emergency, to get any persons set to work upon it but those to whose share of business it properly belongs ; upon the other there is a strong body of competitors for employment susceptible of an immediate and unreluctant direction upon any work which may be urgently

required. The machine is self-acting in a great measure, and those whose minds ought to be free are spared the cares and vexations of perpetually guarding against delays of copyists, parrying their excuses, and exercising a sort of control which can hardly be exercised with success by persons of a certain class in life over each other. I speak from experience in both kinds when I say, that copying work will be done by the piece for a third of the money which it costs when committed to salaried clerks and with five times the speed; and I would observe, also, that the want of smoothness and celerity in this part of the operations of a statesman's official establishment constitutes a most important defect, — a defect much more important than it might at first sight appear. Measures upon which the fate of individuals or the material interests of communities may be said in some sort to depend, will sometimes be obstructed, neglected, and delayed, owing to

this defect ; and men in authority are often (to the credit of their personal dispositions) so averse to giving trouble to those about them or to the appearance of throwing away trouble which has been given, that measures and alterations of measures, in cases in which the sort of trouble in question ought to weigh no more than as the dust of the balance, sometimes turn upon the want of easy action in this part of the system of an office.

The copying part of the business being thus disposed of, it would remain to estimate what number of *minds* (in addition to those of the minister and his under secretaries) would be equal to the transaction of affairs in the office ; and of so many men, or perhaps rather more than so many, its establishment of clerks should consist. I say rather more, because some allowance must be made upon any system of selection that could be devised, for failures and bad appointments.

II. And this brings me to the second head, concerning the selection and nomination of the clerks. With regard to the class for confidential copying who are never to rise above that employment, the qualifications to be required are obvious; they must write a good hand and be discreet and trustworthy. With regard to the other class, one reason for putting at once to intellectual employment men who are ever to be so employed, is that if they are only to rise to that employment after a lapse of years, they will never be chosen with much reference to their fitness for it. A man never will be chosen in any given year on account of qualifications which are to lie dormant for ten or five or even for two years succeeding. Every thing in this world is done with reference to immediate effects, or at least without reference to any very distant ones.

Of the various modes by which fit clerks of the intellectual class may be found and chosen

and the appointments guarded, there are two which can be reduced to rule and system : 1st. Examination, — 2d. Probation. At the Treasury within the last two years a system of examination has been adopted. Upon the occurrence of a vacancy amongst the clerkships, three competing candidates are admitted to examination simultaneously ; each is shut up separately with a bundle of papers to act upon ; the performances are compared each with each, and the best performer is selected. At the Colonial Office for several years past no clerk has been appointed without passing through a twelve-months' probation, at the end of which the probationer is pronounced to be either fit or unfit for admission on the establishment. Each of these rules is good, but the advantages of both should be conjoined, and even when conjoined should not be relied upon to the neglect of other means of success. Probation should not be relied upon to the omission of examination,

nor examination to the omission of the most sedulous care in the choice of the candidates who shall be admitted to compete and be examined. To require that the candidates shall be three or more simultaneously for one vacancy is a good device, because justice to individuals being unhappily a much stronger motive with most men than justice to the state, a greater security is taken against undue indulgence on the part of the examining authority when the result of indulging one individual is an injury done to two other individuals, than when the result should be only an injury done to the public service. It would be well that not only the competitors on the examination should be three for one probationary appointment, but that the probationers should also be three competing for one established and confirmed appointment. In the case of the probationers, in truth, the need is still greater than in that of the original candidates, to have the public claims

backed up against private interests by other and conflicting private interests. Good nature and kindness towards those with whom they come in personal contact, at the expense of public interests, that is of those whom they never see, is the besetting sin of public men ; and when once a man shall have been admitted within the doors of an office, upon however probationary a footing, and associated with those who are to judge him, men, even if they are desirous to be impartial, will be diffident of their own judgment in condemning him, and feel less difficulty about recommending him ; though the interests they would injure in the former case may be ever so disproportionate to those which they endanger in the latter.

After all is done that rule and system can do to secure the best selection, the less systematic means may not be the least important ; and these must depend upon the care, judgment, and zeal of the patron, in availing himself of all the

casual knowledge which circumstances may throw in his way, and of all that which diligence well directed can obtain. Queen Elizabeth required all heads of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge to make an annual report to her of youths under their supervision who should appear to be fitted for the service of the state; and it was well said, by one of that extraordinary constellation of dramatists of her day, before whom almost any statesmen but hers would hide their diminished heads —

“ The world is not contracted in a man

“ With more proportion and expression

“ Than in her court her kingdom.”*

The masters of the great schools, as well as the heads of colleges, might be valuable sources of information; and in our days there are many other sources. Our periodical literature fur-

* *Bussy d'Ambois*, by Chapman.

nishes one great index. Debating clubs are another field where talent is paraded. The more general commixture of society affords ready facilities for obtaining a knowledge of any individual out of large classes and associations of educated men, if he be at all distinguished for ability.—And so much concerning selection.

III. The *remuneration* of public servants employed in the business of a statesman may be of three kinds;—that is to say, by the wages of credit and consequence; by the wages of hope and expectation; and by money wages. I will speak of the last first.

It is often said that in order to get efficient service good pay must be offered. But this is not true as applied to first appointments of young men. On the contrary, it will often happen that the largeness of the temptation, by bringing into activity the most powerful interests through which abuses of patronage are

engendered, will lead to the appointment of a worse man than would have been obtained by a smaller offer. On the other hand, though men of promise are to be *had* cheap, whilst they are young and their value is little known to themselves or others, they cannot, when this is no longer their condition, be *kept* for a small consideration, or at least kept contented. But a reasonable degree of contentment is of essential importance where the understanding is the workman. There is no position so strong as that of a man who stands upon his head; and if he be not *induced* to the activity of just thinking and clear reasoning, he will hardly be *coerced* to it. Upon the whole, therefore, I would say that what is most conducive to good appointments in the first instance, and thenceforward to deriving benefit from them, is to offer a small remuneration to the beginner, with successive expectations proportioned to the merits which he shall manifest, and of such increasing amount as shall

be calculated to keep easy, through the progressive wants of single and married life, the mind of a prudent man. Upon such a system, if unfit men belonging to influential families shall make good an entrance into the service, they will be more easily got rid of; since, finding that they have got but little in hand and have but little more to look to, they will hardly be desirous to continue in a career in which they must expect to see their competitors shoot ahead of them.

With respect to the wages of credit and consequence, they will generally flow of themselves in a due proportion. A man of good abilities cannot be employed in the business of a minister without in some degree sharing his power. They are wages of great price and efficacy at the outset; but their value is impaired with their freshness; and by the time that they begin to fall flat in the imagination it will be necessary that more durable inducements should be substituted. And of all inducements the most

invigorating — far beyond either money-wages or the wages of credit and consequence — are the wages of hope and expectation; which may be fitly treated of under the head of Promotion, being the fourth and last of the points which I have proposed to consider in this chapter concerning clerks.

IV. The system of every service which requires energy and ability to be devoted to it, should be so contrived that a meritorious man may find some advancement accrue to him at least once in every ten years. It is in the nature of most men, and especially of men of lively understandings, not to be well pleased if they find themselves at the end of any decade of their lives exactly in the same position which they occupied at the beginning. In sundry of their natural advantages men suffer a sensible decline with every lapse of ten years, and they look for an advance in fortunes to indemnify them for the backslidings of nature. It is

not indeed by the contemplation of any worldly advantages, that we can competently meet or set aside the mournfulness of the text, that Man abideth never in one stay. Yet is it not the less the part of a genuine and religious philosophy, to consider man as created in the purpose that he should be animated by worldly wants still progressive, — a creature not on this side the grave to be disconnected from the creation of which he is a part, and requiring present fruitions and paulo-post-future expectancies to support and console him, as an addition and supplement to that hope which extends over the infinite future, but is flecked and obscured to all men by the intervention of worldly circumstance. And more especially are these accessories to contentment requisite for men engaged in public affairs; because they whose eyes are accessible to the reflex of a thousand encircling objects, and who are even required by their duty to keep their eyes open to all around, cannot be

expected to see more exalted objects in their brightness, as those may who look as it were from the bottom of a well. Active and intelligent men therefore, will, by the common ordinances of nature, become discontented and gather some rust upon the edge of their serviceable quality, if, whilst they find themselves going with large steps down the vale of years, they do not fancy themselves to be at the same time making proportionate approximations to some summit of fortune which they shall have proposed to themselves to attain. Once in ten years is full seldom for an active man to find himself progressive.

The claims to promotion are twofold: — 1st. Merit; 2d. Length of service. And the difficulties to be considered are those which arise when these claims clash; that is, when the most meritorious officer is not he who has served the longest. I do not speak here of the copyists or mechanical class of clerks, but of those

who, by whatever name they may be called, are or should be, in effect, a species of in-door statesmen. And having regard to the large public interests and the deep individual concerns with which they deal, it may be stated broadly as a general rule, that merit, or in other words industrious ability, should be the one essential consideration to be regarded in their promotion. But the question then arises — Will the judge of merit be always incorruptible and infallible? and if not, how are injustice, favouritism, and abusive promotion to be guarded against? The answer, as I conceive, is, that there can be no perfect protection against these evils; that the principle (like most other principles) resolves itself into a matter of degree; and that the protection will be adequate in the main, if the rule of preferment by merit, as against seniority, be applied only where there is a *marked* distinction of merit. For there are divers securities, each of which may be more or less leant upon, and

the aggregate of which will afford in the main all but a certain reliance, where the distinction of merit is marked. If motives of favouritism be at work, the most able and useful officer will at all events have a fair chance of being the favourite. But if he labour under some defect, (as unsightliness, ill manners, &c.) which, without impairing his public utility, tends to throw him out of favour, he will nevertheless have that hold upon the self-interest of his principal which he wants upon his good-will. Further, of this intellectual order of men there will hardly ever be ten brought together, of whom one will not have a *generally acknowledged* superiority to the rest. Even the vanities of men make them just as umpires; and he who cannot pretend to postpone nine others to himself, will not consent to postpone himself to any but the best of the nine. It will be found, then, that a man's reputation amongst his fellows in an office will seldom fail to be according to his deserts,

and that where the superiority is marked, the award of common repute will be both just and decisive; and being so, it will rarely happen that the patron will be induced by any motive of favoritism to brave the reproach of disregarding it. In short, it is in the nature of industrious ability, acting through various methods and upon various motives, to vindicate its own claims under any system in which those claims are recognised; and the system which shall conform to this natural tendency, and be so framed as to legitimate the rising of what is buoyant, will be found to work the best.

- There is, however, a certain moderating hand to be applied even in the preferment of merit.
- Except in urgent and peculiar cases, in cases of extreme necessity on the part of the service, or extraordinary endowments — and character also — on that of the individual, preferment should proceed, as Lord Bacon teaches, “per gradus,

non per saltus."* For besides the ordinary evils attendant upon sudden elevations, it should be observed that the hope, and not the fact, of advancement, is the spur to industry; and that by a large dispensation of reward at once, which cannot be followed by like rewards in future, the patron sinks his capital and forestalls that revenue of reward which should furnish him with resources of inducement through successive years. Gratitude is a sentiment which respects the future; and the secret of keeping it alive in the hearts of public servants and preserving their alacrity unimpaired, is —

* The remarks of Lord Bacon upon this topic are in the explication of the 18th Parabola in the book "de Negotiis," which is the 8th book of the "de Augmentis." In that explication Machiavel is referred to (by a mistake of memory as I conceive) for a precept which is not, I think, to be found in his works, but which is fully set forth in the 15th and 21st of the "Hypomneses Politicæ" of Guicciardini.

“ To give us bits of kindness, lest we faint,

“ But no abundance ; that we ever want

“ And still are begging.” *

Moreover, if a man be advanced largely at once, there will not only be little room left for his further promotion, but that little room will seem less when measured upon the scale to which his ambition will now expand itself; for he who has once advanced by a stride will not be content to advance afterwards by steps. Public servants, therefore, like race-horses, should be well fed with reward, but not to fatness.

* Green's ‘ Tu quoque.’

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCERNING PRECIS-WRITERS, AND PROCESSES OF
BUSINESS.

THE office of precis-writer sometimes is borne upon the establishment of a minister, sometimes is not.

It may be said of a precis, as Lord Bacon said of an index, that it is "useful chiefly to the maker thereof." A precis, properly so called, is an abridgement and nothing else; and he who has to act upon a long series of documents will hardly be able to master their contents without making an abridgement of them for himself. But it is only a smatterer in business who will think it of much assistance to him to have such an abridgement made for him by another.

There may be made, indeed, a species of

abridgement which may be loosely called a precis, but which is, in fact, a great deal more than that. An abridgement which shall retain every thing that is relevant, and reject what is not ; which shall arrange the facts and elements of a case in their proper sequence, throwing them out in prominent relief or reducing them with a light touch, according to the proportions of their significance, and thereby leading necessarily to the conclusions which a just judgment would suggest, — such an abridgement is indeed useful, for it transacts the business from beginning to end; but he who makes it must have the hand of a master, and should be called a statesman and not a precis-writer. Call him what you will, the man who estimates the relevancy and significance of the respective facts of a case does in reality form a judgment upon it; and the statement which conveys the facts in the spirit of that judgment, conveys the judgment itself.

He who has the statement of a question after this manner will, generally speaking, have the decision of it; for the superior functionary will seldom (unless moved by jealousy or presumption) consider himself competent to take the decision out of the hands of the man who has made an elaborate and judicious investigation into the facts.

The process should be much the same whether a man's task be to prepare *himself* for coming to a decision on a case, or to prepare another. In either case he should write out the whole of the facts and inferences on which he is to found his conclusions; and he will find it most convenient to begin with a naked narrative of facts and dates, resolutely reserving all inferences and comments till the narrative statement shall be completed. This is important to him, not for the sake of clearness only in viewing and conveying the case, but also to guard against warps of his judgment, arising from a premature ex-

ercise of it. It is indeed impossible but that the judgment should be exercised as the statement of fact is proceeded with. But what a man writes, he fixes to a certain degree, and will not see occasion to unfix so readily as he ought, when the further facts open upon him. Moreover, in cases of quarrel and dispute, which are the great majority of cases submitted for decision to a civil functionary, to elucidate the matter in the precedent stages of it by your own knowledge of what occurred in the subsequent, is not to convey that clear idea of the rise and progress of the case and of the merits of the parties, which would result from keeping the reader, as you advance, in the same state of information in which the parties concerned were at the several stages of their proceedings. The merits of the parties generally depend much upon their state of information when they acted, and to obscure the view of this state of information is to confuse the question of their merits.

With respect to doubtful facts (which are in themselves matter of opinion), it will be best, in long and complicated cases, that they should form a second division of the narrative, in which the evidence for and against them should be stated and weighed, and the uncertainties as much as possible cleared away. In a third division it will be convenient to draw the inferences which should result from the undisputed or ascertained facts. In a fourth, the inferences as modified by the uncertainties : and in a fifth, which may be the final division, may be set forth the measures proper to be taken upon a survey of the entire case.

It may be thought that this separation of inference from fact, which compels of course a cursory resumption of facts to accompany the inferences, will lead to redundancy and repetition. But the fear of such repetition as this proceeds upon a mistaken notion of what sort of enlargement is really burdensome. The great

maxim to hold by is, that nothing is to be avoided which makes *easy reading* of a voluminous and complicated case. There would be no harm in reading the facts of such a case twice over, even if they were twice stated at large; and such light and rapid resumptions of them as shall be required for the drawing of inferences, will be found to be any thing but redundant. And it may be observed generally of the style and method to be employed in such statements, that freedom and an easy copiousness is better than a conciseness forced upon the style beyond what would result from the natural vigour of the writer's understanding. The object of conciseness in such matters is not to spare words, but to spare intellectual labour. We are not to grudge, therefore, such interstitial and transitional matter as may promote an easy connection of parts and an elastic separation of them, and keep the reader's mind upon springs as it were.

In purely argumentative statements, or in the argumentative divisions of mixed statements, and especially in argumentative speeches, it is essential that the issue to be proved should be distinctly announced in the beginning, in order that the tenour and drift that way of every thing that is said may be the better apprehended; and it is also useful, when the chain of argument is long, to give a forecast of the principal bearings and junctures, whereby the attention will be more easily secured and pertinently directed throughout the more closely consecutive detail, and each proposition of the series will be clenched in the memory by its foreknown relevancy to what is to follow. These are well-known rules, which it were superfluous to cite, except for the instruction of the young. But examples may be occasionally observed (though perhaps less in this country than elsewhere) of juvenile orators who will keep the secret of the end they aim at, until they shall have led their hearers through

the long chain of its antecedents, in order that they may produce a sort of surprise by forcing a sudden acknowledgment of what had not been foreseen. The disadvantage of this method is that it puzzles and provokes the hearer through the sequence, and confounds him in the conclusion : the only advantage is an overcharged impression of the orator's ingenuity, on the part of those who may have attended to him sufficiently to have been convinced. It is a method by which the business of the argument is sacrificed to a puerile ostentation in the conduct of it, — the ease and satisfaction of the auditors to the vanity of the arguer.

CHAPTER XXV.

UPON THE METHODS BY WHICH A STATESMAN
CAN UPON OCCASION GET HIS WORK DONE OUT
OF DOORS.

THESE methods are chiefly two ; by special commissions, and by committees of either of the Houses of Parliament.

The advantages of the latter method are that a number of members of Parliament are brought acquainted with the question which the committee is charged to inquire into. But with this is connected the disadvantage of diverse opinions arising amongst them, which is apt to end in the compromise of giving effect to none.

The advantage of the former method is, that if the number of the commissioners be suffi-

ciently limited, and the scope given them be sufficiently ample, they may carry through their work from beginning to end, leaving nothing to seek but the stamp of authority. There are few things more important in the business of the state, than that the results of inquiry and research should be realised by those who have had the conduct of it. B. will never go to work as heartily and competently to give effect to A.'s inquiry as if it had been his own; nor will A. inquire as pertinently and exactly, if he knows that with inquiry his function will cease. A man will inquire to the purpose, and consider the matter with distinctness and directness, then only when he knows that he will have eventually to solve every question that he raises. In general, therefore, a commission which is charged to collect information with reference to the expediency of any measure legislative or executive, should be further charged to conclude for or against the measure, and if con-

cluding for it, to draft the bill or instruction by which they would propose that it should be carried into effect.

A commission should seldom consist of more than three members, and in many cases a single commissioner with two secretaries would be better, but for the superior weight and authority which, whether erroneously or not, will attach in the public mind to the judgment of three commissioners as compared with that of one. Erroneously I believe it to be in all cases where the matter to be judged of by the commission is integral and not separable into portions more or less independent of each other; because in such cases the judgment of the three or more men is almost always determined by the judgment of one amongst them.

But when the matters in question, though having some mutual relevancy, are susceptible of division in such wise as to admit of different

minds taking different parts, and of different views entering into one general purpose, then it may be expedient that the commission should consist of several members. In truth, the system of governing by a cabinet is founded upon this principle,—the cabinet being a board of commissioners for governing the country.

Such boards or other co-operative bodies should be so formed that youthfulness and elderliness may meet in due proportion in their counsels. If any such body be composed wholly of elderly men, it will commonly be found to be ineffective so far as invention of new courses and intrepidity of purpose is required; and perhaps also unequal to any unusual amount of spontaneous activity. If, on the other hand, it be composed wholly of young men, its operations will probably be wanting in circumspection; and the foresight by which it will be guided will be too keenly directed to the objects of a sanguine expectation, too dully to prospects

of evil and counteraction. The respective positions in life of the young and the old operate to these results not less than their temperaments. For the young have their way to make, their reputation to earn ; and it is for their interest to be enterprising as well as in their nature : the old have ascertained their place in life, and they have perhaps a reputation to lose.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON PARLIAMENTARY INTERPOSITION IN ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS.

THE most ordinary case of this interposition is when some civil officer is censured or dismissed by the Government, and a member of Parliament represents the censure or dismissal as unjust.

It can hardly ever be worth while merely for the sake of one individual that the time of Parliament should be thus occupied ; but it is well worth while for the sake of such control, from the known possibility of parliamentary interference, as may produce general circumspection and impartiality on the part of the Government.

It should never be forgotten, however, that supposing the time of Parliament to be used as it ought to be, the allotment of a single hour of it to the hearing of an individual's case is a great public loss, and a waste which can be justified only on the principle of making occasional sacrifices, the effect of which shall spread into a general check.

Such interposition should be used sparingly therefore, and with conditions. 1st. That the Government has been unjust must be not dubious but plain: the time of parliament may with reason be occupied to right a wrong, but not to solve a doubt. 2d. All possible previous steps must be shown to have been taken without success to attain the object of correction. 3d. The business should be as far as possible laid before Parliament in a documentary form before it is permitted to be debated, that so all preliminary controversy may be avoided in the debate.

If fulfilment of these conditions were universally exacted by what is called "the sense of Parliament," the check upon the Government would be sufficiently efficacious, and yet the instances would be few in which Parliament would find itself called upon to lay aside its momentous functions for the purpose of judging and protecting an individual,—a sort of business which, unless in a very clear case, a legislative assembly is in truth but ill-adapted to deal with.

But as matters are now managed, if any person whose interests are affected by an administrative act, or any officer who has been dismissed for misconduct, be provided with influential friends, or with a sufficient share of personal energy and activity, the concernment can hardly be so trivial, or the case of injury so questionable, but that Parliament shall be exhibited to the country leaving to the right and to the left matters of the deepest national interest, and starting off upon the allegation of individual

wrong, with a wonderful extravagance in the mismeasurement of objects and misconception of duties.

This, though a great evil, is one which the Government cannot well correct; for if the Government should try to stop a debate of this kind *in limine*, on the ground that it would waste the time of Parliament, they would subject themselves to an imputation of attempting to stifle an inquiry into their own conduct. All that they can do is, first to clear themselves on the case, and then to denounce with a deterrent severity the party, who, with an unworthy forgetfulness of the high trust attaching to a seat in the councils of a country, shall have abused the ear of Parliament with unfounded and frivolous complaints.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON AIDS TO LEGISLATION TO BE DERIVED FROM
EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE.

It is not only necessary that the legislature should make provision in the laws for their due execution ; it is also desirable that the executive agency should work towards new legislation on the same topics. For the execution of laws deals with those particulars by an induction of which the results to be aimed at in legislation are to be ascertained ; and the generalisation from those particulars can only be well effected when the lowest in the chain of functionaries is made subsidiary to the operations of the highest in a suggestive as well as in an executive capacity, — that is, when the experience of the

functionary who puts the last hand to the execution of any particular class of enactments, is made available for the guidance of the legislature.

But in most cases this cannot be accomplished to any useful purpose otherwise than by a system of filtration. The lowest classes of functionaries, whilst they may be assumed to have the largest knowledge of facts, must also be taken to have the least power to discriminate and to generalise. They cannot be expected to distinguish barren from fruitful facts; those which are mere specialties from those which lead to general conclusions. What is wanted is, that the crude knowledge collected in the execution of the laws should pass upward from grade to grade of the civil functionaries intrusted with their administration, more and more digested and generalised in its progress; and, lastly, should reach the legislature in the shape of a matured project of law, whereby what was superfluous in the

legislation in question might be abrogated; what was amiss might be amended; what was insufficient, enlarged; what was doubtful, determined; what was wanting, added.

As an example of the manner in which executive experience might thus be made to tell back upon legislation, let the process be supposed to be adopted for the improvement of the various laws which depend for their execution wholly, or in part, upon the body of police as now constituted in London, under the authority of the statute 10 Geo. IV. c. 44. This body consists of—1. Commissioners; 2. Superintendants; 3. Inspectors; 4. Sergeants; 5. Constables. These last, the constables, must necessarily, as they walk the streets, witness from time to time many evils which there is not, though there might properly be, a lawful authority to correct. Let it be a part of their duty to report these forthwith to the sergeants; let the sergeants be required to

furnish a monthly selection of such reports, with any remarks they may wish to make upon them, to the inspectors ; let the inspectors be required to forward a quarterly digest and commentary to the superintendant ; the superintendant to the commissioners ; let the commissioners submit annually to the Secretary of State for the Home Department such projects and drafts for the amendment of the law as this filtered experience shall suggest ; and, finally, let the bill, which, after due revision, shall be approved by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, be brought into Parliament by the organ of that department in the House of Commons. Let the police magistrates also, who do not exactly fall into this line of police authorities, be required to make periodical reports of defects of law, as illustrated by cases coming before them, and let these reports be dealt with in like manner. Without pretending to such practical knowledge of the metropolitan police as would insure apti-

title in the allotment of this or that duty to one or the other grade, the question may yet be asked, whether a process, conducted generally upon the proposed principle, might not be expected to promote the cause of order and innocence in this metropolis?

But with the narrow limits which opinion, as it exists, assigns to the duties of the executive Government and its servants (to which narrowness of duty the Government and its servants naturally confine themselves), responsibility for defect of law falls nowhere; or if it be held to fall upon the legislature, it is so diffused over that numerous body, as to be of no force or effect. When evil manifests itself, in however cognisable a shape, there is no member of the Government, whether or not he be also a member of the legislature, nor any servant of the public, who does not think that his case for non-interference is complete, so soon as he makes out that the evil is owing to a fault in

the law. The question whose fault is it that the law is faulty, is asked of no man, and naturally no man asks it of himself. But that must needs be regarded as an imperfect system of administrative government, which does not lay these faults at the door of some individual functionary, in the numerous cases in which it would be perfectly practicable to do so. Did C. observe the evil and report it to B.? if not, let him answer for it: did B. consider of it, and suggest a remedy to A.? if not, let B.'s neglect be denounced: did A. adopt B.'s suggestion, or devise something better, and go to parliament for a remedial law? if not, let the charge lie against A.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH ABLE, AND OF THE MANNER IN WHICH INDIFFERENT STATESMEN ARE DETERRED FROM AVAILING THEMSELVES OF ABLE SERVICE; AND OF THE EVILS WHICH ENSUE FROM MEN'S AUTHORITY BEING IN THE INVERSE RATIO OF THEIR ABILITIES.

It might be thought that able men would court a connection with each other from intellectual sympathies and the desire of mutual improvement; and so indeed it is with those whose moral nature is large and high according to the measure of their understandings. But with others it is otherwise. Strong men, who being compounded, as the strongest are, of weakness as well as strength, but who feeling all their strength, do not at the same time feel their

weakness, — statesmen of this kind, I say, are apt to rejoice unduly in self-dependence and the consciousness of substantive power, and to surround themselves with such men as will rather reflect them as mirrors, than adequately serve them as instruments. *To make the weak subservient* requires intellectual predominancy only, — and not always that; for strength of animal temperament and an over-ruling vivacity or a determined disposition will often of themselves suffice. *To make the strong subservient* demands certain moral sufficiencies. In order that the strong may serve the strong, there must be mutual respect, and in one or both of the parties a high and rare humility. There must be between the parties conceptions of what is more strong, great, and noble, than any fulfilments are: there must be over the efforts of both a common bond of reverence for what is greater than either. Where there is not this high and by consequence

humble nature in a statesman, or where zeal for public objects does not predominate over self-importance, there are naturally motives enough which will deter one who is sufficiently strong to dispense with strong help from seeking it. Such men through moral deficiency become intellectually short-sighted, and their effect on the world is limited by the circle of their individual and proximate activity.

Weak men of low character and high station have yet greater deterrents, yet livelier jealousies and disgusts towards subordinate strength; though their need for it is more pressing and may often over-rule their indisposition. I say of low character — meaning merely men wanting (as most men are) in such superiority to circumstances as would prevent them from being made low in character by being thus misplaced in life. It is not natural that a statesman labouring under insufficiencies of understanding

should like to have about him those who can take the measure of his capacity. It is not natural that a statesman troubled with infirmity of purpose and defect of civil courage, should wish to be served by men before whom he stands detected and rebuked. But if, casually or through the compulsion of circumstances, he comes to be served by such men, there will ensue with average human nature a debasing struggle. He will be driven to tricks and devices by way of glossing over the falseness of his position. He will have to keep up appearances of ruling, under a consciousness of being ruled. He will be under the necessity of accepting daily obligations from his inferiors, which he will be unwilling to acknowledge to himself, more unwilling to acknowledge to them, and most unwilling to acknowledge to the world. He will live under a sense of humiliation without humbleness; yielding the discharge of his functions to others, and thinking it due to the

dignity of his station to disguise the fact. That must be a rare honesty and generosity of nature which holds out against the corruption of such circumstances; for falseness of position naturally ends in falseness of character.

I know not what precept can suffice to correct the evils of this doubly unequal relation, if the superior in place shall not perceive that the best superiority is to be found in seeking the level of truth, and in a devotion to the public welfare; if the superior in understanding shall not feel that the arrogance of talent is as offensive, illiberal, and ignoble as any other species of arrogance; if both cannot meet upon a higher ground than that of either talent on the one hand or station on the other.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PATRONAGE.

THE engrossing of a considerable quantity of patronage into one disposing hand has this advantage; that after the administrator shall have satisfied any private ends which he may have at heart with a portion of the patronage, he will dispose of the rest with reference to public interests. Whereas if the patronage be comminuted and placed in several hands, each of the patrons may have no more to dispose of than is required to serve his private purposes; or at all events, after feeding the private purposes of so many patrons, a smaller proportion will be left to be bestowed according to the dictates of public spirit. For a like reason the

minister who has been long in office will be the most likely to dispense his patronage properly; for the circle of his private friends is saturated.

When a vacancy is declared, no further delay than is requisite for inquiry and circumspection should take place in choosing amongst the candidates. Delay in such cases extenuates the favour to the successful candidate, and aggravates the disappointment of the others, — it humiliates all. And expectants who are solicitous concerning effects on the character, will have cause to deprecate a prolonged suspense upon such occasions, as being calculated to make them think too much of themselves; except, indeed, the few who hold themselves under a strong moral discipline, — for these will bring strength out of every struggle.

In general the substance of refusals should be mitigated by the manner of them, even when applications are unreasonable. But, nevertheless, occasion should be taken from time to

time, when importunity is signally extravagant, to give it such a repulse as shall mortify and expose the party applicant. By making one example of this kind a minister will intimidate many who would otherwise beset him with demands and supplications. And few things will occasion a statesman so much embarrassment as a prevailing opinion that he will yield that to importunity which he ought to proffer to less forward parties upon juster grounds, and that whether he grants or refuses no harm can be done by asking. A man who is known to be weak in this kind draws upon himself a rush and pressure of solicitation which even a strong man might be unable to make head against.

The victim should be selected by preference from amongst applicants of rank and station (who will give occasion as abundantly as any other class), because importunity on the part of such persons is at once more to be feared for its mischief and less to be excused for its inde-

licacy; because the more eminent the offender the more effective the example; and because persons who are in possession of many worldly advantages can better afford to suffer mortification, and have not so strong a claim as others have upon the charitable constructions and liberal feelings of men in power.

A minister should adopt it as a rule, subject to few exceptions, that he is to make small account of testimonials and recommendations, unless subjected to severe scrutiny and supported by proved facts. Men who are scrupulously conscientious in other things will be often not at all so in their *kindnesses*. Such men, from motives of compassion, charity, good-will, have sometimes given birth to results which the slightest exercise of common sense might have taught them to foresee, and which, if foreseen, might have alarmed the conscience of a buccaneer. I have known acts of kindness done by excellent persons in the way of recommend-

ation, to which a tissue of evil passions, sufferings, cruelty, and bloodshed have been directly traceable; and these consequences were no other than might have been distinctly anticipated. The charity of such persons might be said to be twice cursed; but that the curse which it is to others, may be remitted to them (let us hope) as too heavy a visitation for the sin of thoughtlessness.

Such being the slenderness of the trust to be placed in testimonials, the more easy duty in the exercise of ministerial influence over nominations to places, would seem to be in dealing with persons employed in the minister's more immediate service, of whose qualifications therefore he is personally cognisant. But if a man's translation to a different service be requisite for his promotion, his very merit will stand in his way with some patrons; for however the public service might be benefited by his employment

in a higher station elsewhere, to them he is more useful where he is. Theirs is the policy of the ant, who bites the grain she stores, lest it should grow.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCERNING THE AMUSEMENTS OF A
STATESMAN.

AMUSEMENT is necessary to man in every station of life, and it is a main assistance to the knowledge of men to observe which way this necessity lies with them ; to inquire, not only how they occupy themselves, but after what manner they amuse themselves. If the magistracy shows the man, according to the Greek adage, his amusements show him more ; for in them nature has her way.

The species of relaxation which is adapted to a statesman depends in part upon the manner in which he is apt to suffer from the pressure of business, — whether he is apt to sink into

lassitude (which is the safe way), or to run amain in excitement. Books are an easy and commodious resource, because they can be summoned and dismissed at pleasure; but in the extreme of either of the cases above mentioned they will not be suitable; because in the one case the mind will be too dead to be moved by them, in the other it will be running too fast for them to lay hold of it. But in those which are not cases of extremity either way, books may be used, — light books for the languid man, strong books for the excited; and there are books of a light strength which may not come amiss to a man in either predicament.

But as there will not always be life enough in the society of books to afford enjoyment to a statesman, let him step from the library to the drawing-room. A small society should not infrequently be formed there, consisting for the most part — but not wholly — of intimate acquaintances, and they should be persons of lively

conversation, but above all, of easy natures. Knowledge and wit will naturally be found in sufficient proportions in the society of a man of talents occupying an eminent position; but if knowledge be argumentative and wit *agonistic*, the society becomes an arena, and loses all merit as a mode of relaxation. An adequate proportion of women will slacken the tone of conversation in these particulars, and yet tend to animate it also. And there is this advantage in the company of women — especially if some of them be beautiful and innocent — that breaks in conversation are not felt to be blanks; for the sense of such a presence will serve to fill up voids and interstices. But though knowledge, wit, wisdom, and beauty should be found in this circle, there should be no sedulous exclusion of such persons not possessed of these recommendations, as would otherwise naturally find a place there. For unless the statesman between the business and the pleasures of the world have

lost sight of its charities, he will not find his society the ~~less~~ of a relaxation for mixing some of the duties and benevolences of life with its enjoyments; and he will count amongst its amenities if not amongst its charms, some proportion of attentions to the aged and kindness to the dull and unattractive. It may also be observed that dulness, like a drab ground, serves to give an enhanced effect to the livelier colours of society.

It will be perhaps equally desirable for the statesman whose business exhausts his excitability, and for him whose excitement, beginning in business, pursues him in his social hours, that the society which they cultivate should be *quietly* gay. Exuberant noisy gaiety will overbear the spirits of the exhausted man, and overstimulate those of the other. Some reference should be had to this object in the lighting of his rooms; for the loud or low talking of a company, together with the tone of mind belonging

to the tone of voice, very much depends upon that, — as any canary-bird will teach us when a handkerchief is thrown over his cage.

Music is an excellent mode of relaxation to those who possess — I will not say an *ear* for it, because that seems a shallow expression — but a faculty of the mind for it. Yet unless a man's susceptibility in this kind be very peculiar, he will generally prefer music which mixes itself with conversation, or alternates with it by brief returns, to music which sets it aside. Instrumental music, exciting without engrossing the mind, will often rather stimulate and inspire conversation than suppress it; though to take this advantage of it, the company must break up into retired groups or couples, speaking low in corners. But the singing of ladies is a thing which, in courtesy if not for enjoyment, must be heard in silence; unless (which is best) it be heard from an adjoining room, through an open door, so that they who desire to listen to the

song closely may pass in, and they who would listen more loosely and talk the while, may stay out. But under all circumstances, and not for the sake of the talk only but for the sake of the songs, it is well that there should be some pause and space between one and another of them — filled up with instrumental music if you will. For a song which has a wholeness in itself should be suffered to stand by itself, and then to die away in the mind of the hearer, time being allowed for the effect of a preceding song to get out of the way of the effect of one which is to follow. It would be well, therefore, if ladies, who are often slow to begin their songs, would not be, when once begun, unknowing to intermit them.

John de Witt, in portraying the character of one of the princes of the house of Orange, says that he “was not blemished with many court vices ; not delighting in *music*, dancing, hunting, gluttony, or drinking.” I have not been deterred by the opinion of the Grand Pensionary,

as implied in this passage, from commending music as a mode of relaxation ; for a greater man than he, and though perhaps not a better man, yet certainly a more austere moralist, has said, notwithstanding all his austerity, “ Who “ shall silence the airs and madrigals that whis- “ pér softness in chambers ? ” * —and in another place has advised that students should be re-created with music “ whilst unsweating them- “ selves,” and that “ the like also would not be “ inexpedient after meat, to assist and cherish “ nature in her first concoction.” †

As to eating and drinking, they are matters of great danger to a statesman if he resort to them as a relaxation ; and it has been observed that men of great abilities are generally of a large and vigorous animal nature. I have heard it remarked by a statesman of high reputation,

* Milton, Areopagitica.

† Letter to Master Hartlib.

that most great men have died of over-eating themselves ; and without absolutely subscribing to the remark, I would say that it points to a principal peril in the life of such men ; namely, the violent craving for one kind of excitement, which is left as in a void by the flames of another. If a statesman would live long, — which to do is a part of his duty, granting him fitted to render good service to the state, — he must pay a jealous and watchful attention to his diet. A patient in the fever-ward of an hospital scarcely requires to be more carefully regulated in this particular. And he should observe that there are two false appetites to which he is liable ; — the one an appetite resulting from intellectual labour, which though not altogether morbid is not to be relied upon for digestion in the same degree as that which results from bodily exercise ; the other proceeding from nervous irritability, which is purely fallacious.

The sitting after dinner, though much ab-

breviated in our days, might be further abridged, or indeed altogether abandoned, with advantage. An irritability of the stomach often results from confinement to the same posture for more than half an hour after dinner; and if the conversation fails in interest the dessert is resorted to, which, besides being superfluous, is an indefinite sort of eating.

Those to whom public speaking is much of an effort (and it tries the nerves of most men even after they have been accustomed to it for years) should, if possible, dine lightly at least an hour before they are called upon to speak, and should resist the propensity which they will feel to eat soon after they have spoken. The relief and diversion to the nerves which is apt to be sought in this way after a speech, would be obtained in a more wholesome manner by walking for a considerable distance at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON MANNERS.

CONSIDERATIONS of manner and demeanour are by no means to be overlooked as frivolous or unimportant. Whether or not they ought to be, they are, in point of fact, an important element in the life and fortunes of a statesman, or of one who aspires to be a statesman, and generally of all men who seek advancement in a civil or in any other career. And in truth a man's manners have much real and intrinsic significance, in so far forth as they are the result of his individual nature and taste, and not merely learnt or adopted from the society which he frequents. There is a conventional

manner which tells nothing, and may conceal much ; but there is also a natural manner by which a man may be known.

What is conventional and immaterial in manner may be taught ; but in regard to what is important, there is only one precept by which a man can profit ; and that is, that so often as he shall be visited with any consciousness of error in this kind (which will not be infrequently in the case of the young and susceptible) he should search out the fault of character from which the fault of manner flows ; and disregarding the superficial indication except *as* an indication, endeavour to dry up that source. Any want of essential good-breeding must grow out of a want of liberality and benevolence ; any want of essential good taste in manner, out of some moral defect or disproportion ; and when a man stands self-accused as to the out-growth, he should lay his axe to the root. The sense of shame for faults of manner would not be so

strong a thing in men as it is, if it came out of the mere shallows of their nature, and were not capable of being directed towards some higher purpose than that of gracing their intercourse with society. At the same time, nothing will accomplish this lesser purpose more effectually than merging the trivial sensitiveness upon such matters in an earnestness of desire to be right upon them in their moral point of view; and if a man shall make habitual reference to the principle of never doing any thing in society from an ungenerous, gratuitously unkind, or ignoble feeling, he will hardly fail to obtain the ease and indifference as to every thing else which is requisite for good manners; and he will lose in his considerateness for other persons, and for principles which he feels to be worthy of consideration, the mixture of pride and disguised timidity, which is in this country the most ordinary type of inferiority of manner. There is a dignity in the desire to be right, even in the smallest questions wherein

the feelings of others are concerned, which will not fail to supersede what is egoistical and frivolous in a man's personal feelings in society.

In the case of a statesman, perhaps it will be expedient that to the manner of nature and of principle, something should be added upon occasion by histrionic art. This, however, may be a difficulty with many men; and he who endeavours to exercise the art should be very sure that he possesses it; and in such a kind as to make his natural manner the basis of his artificial; for otherwise more will be lost than gained in the attempt. In a statesman's transactions there are many things which cannot be communicated otherwise than by manner without inconvenient commitment or controversy; and that will be the most serviceable manner which can be expressive or inexpressive at pleasure, and be used as a dark lantern to his meanings.

With regard to arts of graciousness, they are the easiest of all to a statesman; for praise and

compliment, which may seem to partake of impertinence when proceeding from an inferior, pass gracefully downwards from one whose superiority of station gives him a right to assume that his approbation or his wish to conciliate has a value. A minister is *entitled* to be complimentary; and what he has principally to take care of is that he do not forfeit the advantages of his privilege by abuse of it, and that his compliments shall be measured and appropriate. Prodigality of panegyric defeats its end by depreciating its value; and misapplication of it ought always to be unsatisfactory by reason of its untruth, and may, under certain circumstances, amount to a corrupt use of an important public instrument. But these are vices which belong to the coarseness of public life, and are seldom altogether escaped by ordinary statesmen.

It has been said of compliments, that men are most flattered by having the merits attributed to them which they least possess; but as

it is only by liars that such compliments can be proffered, so it is only with fools that they can find a favourable acceptance. With others, partial truth with just discrimination will be the most effective agents of flattery. There is much also in the well timing of it; and though compliments should arise naturally out of the occasion, they should not appear to be prompted by the spur of it; for then they seem hardly spontaneous. Applaud a man's speech at the moment when he sits down, and he will take your compliment as exacted by the demands of common civility; but let some space intervene, and then show him that the merits of his speech have dwelt with you when you might have been expected to have forgotten them, and he will remember your compliment for a much longer time than you have remembered his speech.

It is a grace in flattery so to let fall your compliments as that you shall seem to consider them to be a matter of indifference to him to

whom they are addressed; for thus one flattery will include another,—and that other perhaps the most agreeable,—being that of attributing to the party a peculiar absence of self-love. The compliment will also seem the more sincere, as being not aimed at the self-love of the party, but a mere suggestion of fact. Some men may be indirectly flattered by what is in its direct purport the reverse of complimentary; because saying such things to them seems to give them credit for hardihood. Others can be imposed upon by a rough, bluff, hearty, plain-spoken way of eulogising them to their faces, as if what was said was no more than the honest truth, which there ought to be no scruple in declaring.

But the mode of flattery which, being at once safe and efficacious, is the best adapted to the purposes of a statesman, is the flattery of *listening*. He that can wear the appearance of drinking in every word that is said with thirsty ears, possesses such a faculty for conciliating

mankind as a syren might envy. For no syren did ever so charm the ear of the listener, as the listening ear has charmed the soul of the syren. The chief drawback upon the advantages of this species of blandishment is, that it can hardly be employed but at some considerable cost of time; yet with a little dexterity this cost may be reduced: for the more earnest the attention, the more compulsory will seem the breaking off, when the statesman starts as from a dream and looks at his watch. There is another drawback, which is the cost of patience at which this purchase of good-will is effected. This will certainly be considerable on the part of him who only *affects* to listen, and the way to reduce it is to listen in reality; for as sincere talking will impart some interest even to a flimsy material of talk, so with sincere listening something worth notice may be distilled from every man's discourse. Yet it must be confessed that he who can listen with real attention to every

thing that is said to him, has a great gift of auscultation.

These, however, are merely the *tricks* of statesmanship, which it may be quite as well to despise as to practise.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF STATESMEN BRED SUCH, AND OF STATESMEN
BRED IN THE ARMY, IN THE NAVY, IN COM-
MERCE, AND AT THE BAR.

IN matters of outward demeanour a difference may be perceived between statesmen bred in these several lines.

Men brought up to political life from the first will commonly stand the most aloof from mankind at large, or those whom they do not consider to be of the same rank and station with themselves. They begin life in its high places, and they begin it by opposing to the inconveniences of importunity the arrogance of youth. Or if even in youth they are free from arrogance, (as men born to a high station often

are, because they have less occasion for it,) still they cannot but feel the convenience of keeping themselves at that distance from men of humbler rank at which circumstances have placed them.

Men bred in the army or navy, whether high-born or not, have risen through the lower grades of their profession, and have necessarily mixed in daily intercourse with associates of middle station. A distant demeanour is not therefore natural to them, except as growing out of the exercise of authority, and taking place in regard to those who serve under them. But what comes naturally to them in this relation they sometimes like to assume in others.

Statesmen bred at the bar are of all men the least disposed to carry into their outward demeanour the distinctions of rank and station. They have lived a life in which they have been roughly confronted with their fellow-creatures of all classes, and where the extrinsic demar-

cations between man and man get trampled under foot in the "keen encounter of their wits." Moreover, the highest born amongst them has felt his dependence for success upon clients and their attorneys. The forced familiarities of the hustings fade away from a man's recollection like a drunken dream; but those of the bar are worked into his nature.

Mercantile men of the class which now and then furnishes a statesman, seem to have little in their original calling which should prepare them to be either affable or otherwise.

Speaking of aptitudes for such services of a general nature as will frequently in the common course of things devolve a high civil authority upon military and naval officers, (the administration of colonial governments, for example,) it may be observed, that in affairs not falling altogether within the range of their knowledge and experience, the faults of the sailor will be faults of action and enterprise, the faults of

the soldier will be faults of timidity and evasion, If indeed their self-love and self-consequence be much concerned in the matter in hand, if they be irritated by opposition and disrespect, they will be brought more nearly to a common level. But this, I think, will happen less frequently to the sailor than the soldier; for though the former is more prone to peremptory and off-hand courses, the latter is more addicted to pomp and circumstance, carries his jealousy of what he considers his dignity into smaller matters, and finds more frequent occasion for quarrels. Upon the whole, I am of opinion that if the engineer and artillery corps, and also armies like those of India which are placed under peculiar circumstances, be excepted from the comparison, the navy is a more cultivating profession than the army, and produces minds of more general applicability to civil affairs. Let the training circumstances be considered. The soldier's activity is liable

to be sheathed in a long peace. The sailor when he has no other enemy, wages his war with the elements: there is no treaty of perpetual amity with them. The soldier lives under temptations to idleness or frivolous occupation; he has generally a variety and choice of companions amongst his brother officers, who like himself have but little to do; and he commonly finds himself in a situation to obtain easy and welcome access to other society, and especially to that of women. The sailor is limited in his choice of associates: he tires of those he has, and is thrown upon his own resources and his books. The ordinary subject-matter of his duties requires more care, skill, alacrity, and decisiveness, and offers more variety of interest, than the subject-matter of a soldier's duties under the ordinary circumstances of soldiership. Further, he must walk the quarter-deck *alone* four hours by day and four by night at least (and more if the ship's

officers are upon two watches instead of three); and these will be hours of reflection in an open sea and fine weather, and under different circumstances they will be hours of observation and exigency. It is true that *he* also has his seasons of dissipation; but his duties in harbour are more serious than those of a soldier of parallel rank in garrison; and whilst he is most a man of pleasure, he is likewise to no inconsiderable extent a man of business: and some early day the wind changes, he is cast loose from his lighter social connections, one or two of them may be cherished in his fancy for a few days, but they cannot engross much of his life and understanding. In short, his profession combines more than any other, a life of solitude with a life of emergency; and in consequence more than any other unites thoughtfulness with efficiency.

Of the two men who have in our times evinced (so far as I can pretend to judge) the

most powerful faculties of statesmanship, the one was a sailor, the other a soldier *of the Indian army*, — Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, and Major-General Sir Thomas Munro. Both were men who had passed a large portion of their lives in what may be called solitude and seclusion, because it was separation from persons of their own race or class. They rarely mixed with any persons but those over whom they exercised an absolute authority, and with whom they transacted business. They lived aloof from the excitements of society and of daily political contention, and from the provocations to petty ambition and vanity. They were eminently meditative statesmen. Whether their oratorical would have been equal to their other powers, they had no opportunity of showing; but if the opportunity had occurred, and if the wisdom which they possessed could have been cultivated in combination with other modes of life, and with the talents necessary

for the conduct of affairs in a deliberative assembly and in a cabinet, they, or at least one of them (Sir Thomas Munro), would probably have attained to a more steadily commanding station amongst European politicians than any of their contemporary countrymen have reached, or reaching, have long continued to occupy.

The causes of the superiority of artillery and engineer officers are obvious. They have to pass severe examinations in certain branches of knowledge before they can obtain their commissions; and their subsequent eminence in their profession depends upon scientific acquirements, to be mastered at the same time that they are mixing with the world and managing their relations with those whom they command and with those by whom they are commanded.

With regard to mercantile training as conducive to statesmanship, it should hardly, I think, be much esteemed, except in a country where special education to politics being un-

happily unknown, an education in business of any kind may be considered an advantage. It is often supposed that a person brought up in commerce will have some peculiar qualifications for discharging the office of minister for affairs of trade. He may perhaps inspire more confidence in mercantile people, and in so far his previous connection with commerce may be an advantage to himself, and (if he be an efficient minister) to the public. But this confidence should not in reason result from that connection. The knowledge and faculties required for negotiating and legislating on commercial subjects, have in truth hardly any thing in common with those required for conducting a particular commercial business. There is a good deal of error current upon this head. When any law is projected for the regulation of commerce, some set of merchants will commonly take alarm; and if they are assured that the law will not hurt them, they will ask — are

they not likely to know their own business best? What should be the answer of a statesman? "Surely, gentlemen, each of us knows "his own business best; and your business is "to trade, and mine is to legislate."

Of law-bred statesmen (if they have had practice at the bar) the peculiar merit is a more strenuous application of their minds to business than is often to be found in others. But they labour under no light counterpoise of peculiar demerit. It is a truth, though it may seem at first sight like a paradox, that in the affairs of life the reason may pervert the judgment. The straightforward view of things may be lost by considering them too closely and too curiously. When a naturally acute faculty of reasoning has had that high cultivation which the study and practice of the law affords, the wisdom of political, as well as of common life, will be to know how to lay it aside, and on proper occasions to arrive at conclusions by a

grasp; substituting for a chain of arguments that almost unconscious process by which persons of strong natural understanding get right upon questions of common life, however in the art of reasoning unexercised.

The fault of a law-bred mind lies commonly in seeing too much of a question, not seeing its parts in their due proportions, and not knowing how much of material to throw overboard in order to bring a subject within the compass of human judgment. In large matters largely entertained, the symmetry and perspective in which they should be presented to the judgment requires that some considerations should be as if unseen by reason of their smallness, and that some distant bearings should dwindle into nothing. A lawyer will frequently be found busy in much pinching of a case and no embracing of it—in routing and tearing up the soil to get at a grain of the subject;—in short, he will often aim at a degree of complete-

ness and exactness which is excellent in itself, but altogether disproportionate to the dimensions of political affairs, or at least to those of certain classes of them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STATESMAN OUT OF OFFICE.

ONE of the greatest penalties which ambition pays for power is when it incurs a forfeiture of the love of leisure. Yet this is a penalty which few who devote themselves zealously to public business can hope to escape; for the mind which has been accustomed to answer readily to incessant calls from without, will rarely retain much of self-originated activity. The love of leisure and of solitude belongs to the mind which is to itself a spontaneous source of thought; and it will seldom happen that an affluence of spontaneous thought will remain to a mind which has been subjected habitually to

the yoke and goad of circumstance. The craving for office with which statesmen are so often reproached is, perhaps, in the more active of them, quite as much a craving for business as for emolument or power; and their unseasonable love of business grows out of their forfeiture of the love of leisure. Rarely as well as fortunately endowed by nature is that man who can love one or the other according to his occasions.

But if leisure cannot be loved for its own sake by a statesman quitting office, it may yet be valued by him, if he considers well even the less worthy of the uses which may be made of these intervals in a busy career. His mind may not be (what few are) sufficiently rich, elastic, and various to find a compensation for the sunshine in the deeper verdure which grows beneath the shade; but he may nevertheless estimate at something the profits to be derived from it, in the spirit of that husbandry which

looks for a ranker growth when thorns have been thrown over the turf. Let him consider, therefore, what are the defects of knowledge which have been most sensibly felt by him when in office, and which he had then no time or opportunity to supply; and let this be his season of such preparation as shall enable him to resume office at a future time with more ample resources.

His health, also, will need to be recruited; and seldom as statesmen have the prudence to retire from office voluntarily on this account, it is not unfrequently, perhaps, that health and life are saved to them by dismissal. For it may be observed that few of the effective statesmen who, in this country and in these times, have enjoyed a long unbroken tenure of office, have lived their threescore years and ten.

Another purpose which may be answered by retirement, is to enable the statesman to see more clearly what course he has been pursuing

in life, and whither it is leading him. When he quits the King's highway of office, he should endeavour to gain an eminence from which he may survey the region through which he has travelled, and his track through it, lying distinctly below him as in a map. In every man's career, and especially in that of a statesman, a change, a pause, a break, is necessary from time to time, to enable him to understand his life, and to weigh permanent interests and durable effects in an undisturbed medium. Change also, considered merely *as change*, helps to enlarge the nature of one who is competent to deal with adversity and prosperity. By vicissitude a reflecting mind is cultivated and informed; a mind which is not too weak to bear it is invigorated; and one which tends upwards is elevated.

Whilst these advantages are to be derived from retirement, it will very often happen in this country that a leading statesman's loss of

office is attended with but little loss of political importance. Even for the activity which is directed to immediate effects he may have no inconsiderable scope in the conduct of a parliamentary opposition; and he will continue to cover a space in the public mind proportioned to the reputation which he has acquired. It might be thought, therefore, that in many such cases the change would be acceptable. In point of fact, however, it seems to be rarely so; and the reason would appear to be, that most statesmen do not find themselves enabled to bring home to their own minds a satisfactory sense of their importance merely by the contemplation of that in which it really consists, unaided by impressions upon the senses. A number of very little things, which go to make up the *bustle* of greatness, are necessary to keep up in them a strong and lively assurance that they are great. When Sir Walter Scott describes the greatness of Buonaparte in the most brilliant

stage of his career, the arrival and despatch of couriers enter into the picture which he draws. And in like manner it may be believed that the impression which most statesmen receive of their own greatness is much enhanced, unconsciously perhaps to themselves, by the granting of audiences, the receiving of deputations, the summonses to levees and councils, and divers other incidents which colour their importance to the eyes of their fancy, making a *pictorial* presentment of it, as it were ; whereas, without those incidents, their power stands before them rather in a naked and *statuesque* ideal, by which an ordinary imagination is not so easily filled. The appreciation of greatness which is in no way made palpable to the mind through the senses is analogous to the love of posthumous greatness ; which, when it is loved for its own sake purely, and not partly for the sake of the present reputation of posthumous greatness to come, is the highest abstraction of ambition.

The most memorable example which our history presents, of a struggle between the love of the shows of greatness and the love of its realities, is that of Lord Bacon, the most memorable of men. "*Multum incola est anima mea,*" had been his account of himself at an early period of his career; but in a soft and comprehensive nature worldly susceptibilities were necessarily to have a share, and the circumstances of the time were calculated to give them a predominance. There never was a court in which a philosopher might so pardonably desire to set his foot, as that which existed when Bacon chose his path in life. The sovereign was such as he might honourably serve, the statesmen such as he might worthily compete with. Incessant and unavailing endeavours to rise during that reign exercised his heart in ambition, and gave the greater value to his subsequent success; and thus the indwelling spirit which nature had given him was

sacrificed to an external life. But when this life in its turn fell a sacrifice to circumstances, then, though there was disgrace and a tainted character to be contended with, his substantial greatness rose nevertheless like a monument over the shell that had been buried : and wide as may be the difference as to natural endowments between this man and others, yet statesmen who have any of the resources of a contemplative mind may, in their degree and according to their means, profit by a consideration of the manner in which Lord Bacon dignified his retirement from public life. It is beautifully said in the close of a panegyric upon him by one of his most eminent contemporaries*, — “ In his adversity I ever prayed “ that God would give him strength ; for greatness he could not want.”

* Jonson.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

I CLOSE these dissertations with a full sense of the incoherent manner in which they have been brought together, shaping themselves into no system, falling into no methodised sequence, and holding to each other by hardly any thing beyond their relevancy to one subject. My apology for so offering them is, that if I had applied myself to devise a system, or even a connected succession, I must necessarily have written more from speculative meditation, less from knowledge. What I knew practically, or by reflection flowing from circumstance, must have

been connected by what I might persuade myself that I knew inventively, or by reflection flowing from reflection. I am well aware of the weight and value which is given to a work by a just and harmonious incorporation of its parts. But I may be permitted to say, that there is also a value currently and not unduly attached to what men are prompted to think concerning matters within their knowledge. Perceiving that I was not in a condition to undertake such a work as might combine both values, the alternative which I have chosen is that of treating the topics severally, as they were thrown up by the sundry suggestion of experience.

It is possible, indeed, that by postponing my work to a future period, a further accumulation of experience might have enabled me to improve it in the matter of connection and completeness, without derogating from the other claim. But it has appeared to me that there are considerations which render the present time seasonable

for the publication of a book, even thus imperfect, upon this theme.

Of the two classes of political questions,—those concerning forms of government and those concerning its administration,—there are seasons for both. I would sedulously guard myself against the error of undervaluing that class of questions of which I know least. I admit that, under very many aspects of political society, questions concerning forms of government exceed all others in importance. I am far indeed from subscribing to that couplet of Mr. Pope's, which has obtained such singular celebrity, —

“ For forms of government let fools contest ;

“ Whiche'er is best administered is best.”

No rational man did ever dispute that a good administration of government is the *summum bonum* of political science: but neither can it be reasonably denied that good forms of govern-

ment are essential to its good administration : they are contested on this ground ; and to dismiss the contending parties with the epithet applied to them by Mr. Pope, appears to be hardly worthy of an instructed writer.

But with all due respect for questions of form and for an exclusive attention to them in their paramount season, what I would suggest is, that a time may come in which these questions should be degraded to a secondary rank, and questions of administration should take their place. I would observe that the contest concerning forms may be so engrossing, and so long continued, as to defeat its own end. It may do so not only for the time, but in its ultimate result. Whilst all men's minds are agitated by these contests, whilst owing to this agitation administrative efficiency is suspended, and administrations are fugitive and precarious, it is clear that the end in view is sacrificed for the time being. And though it be not equally

clear, it may yet be reasonably offered for consideration, that after constitutional reforms have been carried far enough to make it the interest of a government to engage in administrative reforms, the further progress of the former will be rather retarded than accelerated by the suspension of the latter.

Suppose, for example, the case of a people who felt the want of good laws in general, but whose greatest want, though the least felt, was that of moral, religious, and intellectual instruction; and suppose them living under a form of government so imperfect as not to make it the interest of their rulers to supply their wants. Suppose this people in the progress of time to have attained casually enough of intellectual instruction to make them impatient of their form of government, and thereupon to effect from time to time such changes of that form as shall at length make it the interest of the government to apply itself to their religious,

moral, and civil improvement:—so far forth their efforts and changes were means, and the end was not sacrificed, even temporarily. But imagine this people in the pursuit of this end, by these means, to have effected in their own minds and desires, as the manner of all people is, a conversion of the means into the end, and to have acquired a disposition to fix their desires upon changes of form, without any or with a disproportionate reference to administrative measures. From that time forward their agitation of constitutional questions, whether or not it may tend to amendments of their constitution, will at least conjoin with that tendency a sacrifice. Measures for their instruction (which by the hypothesis is their greatest want) will be intermediately suspended or impeded. And furthermore, the constitutional reforms themselves may be either less rapidly, or less beneficially and substantially obtained. For they who hold that knowledge is power, will

admit that to retard the acquisition of knowledge by the people, pending the discussion of constitutional changes, is, in one of its results at least, to impede their advance to power, and to postpone the substance of popular power to the form.

It is not, of course, as logical propositions exacting necessary assent, that I apply these remarks to the present circumstances of this country. The case assumed merely represents my own opinion and belief in regard to our political predicament; and the opinion and belief are stated as a motive for making an early effort, and an apology if it be a premature one, to divert the attention of thoughtful men from forms of government to the business of governing.

THE END.

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